













# In Point of Honor.

A Novel.

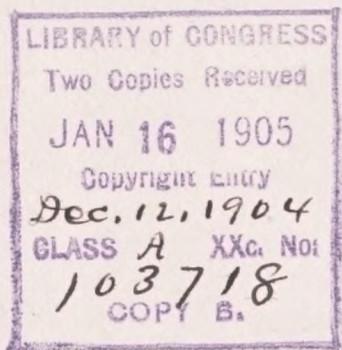
By

John Winsley Pratt.



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RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE  
MEMORY OF  
HUGH O'DONALD DAVIS



## My Excuse

This story was originally written in order to gratify the whim of a young lady, and with no thought of it ever being published. After having read MARY JOHNSTON's "Prisoners of Hope," I sent the volume to the said young lady, pronouncing it a captivating story excellently told. She was so much disappointed over the way in which "Prisoners of Hope" ended that I volunteered to continue the story—extricate Landless from his position upon the rocks in a manner following the usual custom of fiction writers—just for her satisfaction. My effort pleased her. In fact she was so well pleased as to let it be known to many of her friends who had read the book, and I had quite a demand for the "continuation of the story," as they were pleased to call it. Their praises were so profuse that a great big literary bee came buzzing in my ear, and I decided to re-write the story—changing the time and condition by a little use of addition and subtraction. "IN POINT OF HONOR" is the result. In the telling of this story I have endeavored to give an account of one of the most mysterious tragedies that has ever occurred in the history of the state of Tennessee; also to vindicate the honor of a man long living in another state under an assumed name.

THE AUTHOR.

## Contents

|   |
|---|
| IN WHICH SOME CHARACTERS ARE INTRODUCED - - - I |
| TWO IMPERIAL LETTERS - - - - - II               |
| IN POINT OF HONOR - - - - - III                 |
| THE INDIAN'S STORY - - - - - IV                 |
| ARTHUR HOWARD NOLL ON THE THRESHOLD - - V       |
| THE VIGIL OF A NIGHT - - - - - VI               |
| THE PURSUIT - - - - - VII                       |
| A CLEARING IN THE WILDERNESS - - - - - VIII     |
| BAFFLED BY A PAIR OF BOOTS - - - - - IX         |
| UNDER THE SHADOW OF A MOUNTAIN - - - - - X      |
| BITS FROM HISTORY - - - - - XI                  |
| AS TO RAFFLES - - - - - XII                     |
| SOME HOURS OF INDECISION - - - - - XIII         |
| IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE - - - - - XIV              |
| A FOREST DRAMA - - - - - XV                     |
| AMONG THE ECHOING CRAIGS - - - - - XVI          |
| THE BIRD OF FREEDOM - - - - - XVII              |
| THE SUPREME MOMENT - - - - - XVIII              |
| THE PARDON THAT CAME TOO LATE - - - - XIX       |

# In Point of Honor.

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## CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH SOME CHARACTERS ARE INTRODUCED.

**S**IX men stood looking out across a vale that stretched away from the mountains, as beautiful and exquisite as any in Switzerland or Italy. Stretching away from the mountains to the Watauga, which in the Indian vernacular is "Beautiful River;" and beautiful river it is. Stand upon its banks and look down into its glassy waters and you see a heaven below, and then look up, and behold a heaven above—two mirrors, each reflecting the trembling stars.

That was a valley of East Tennessee, where stands the Great Roane, the Great Smoky, the Great Unicoi, and the Great Stone mountains, among the loftiest in America, and upon whose summits the clouds gather of their own accord on the brightest day. There Vulcan might forge his thunderbolts and the gods of Olympus hold their councils of war.

The men stood silent, drinking in the impressive grandeur of the scene. As far as the eye could reach stood forests of giant hemlock and laurel, oak and ash, pine and cedar, where the axe of the pioneer had never left a scar.

"Nations, like men who compose them, grow—and

### In Point of Honor.

decay too, for that matter," spoke one John Sevier. "This constant waxing and waning, inpour and out-flow of the tide of humanity is very interesting to trace. And what causes it all? Sometimes liberty is the goal, but more often it is the search for gold. It was the greed of gold that planted the seed of the Anglo-Saxon in this country and in India; but love of liberty was what caused yonder little colony to squat upon the banks of the Watauga with James Robertson as its leader. That colony, gentlemen, is the advance guard of a mighty civilization. That valley, yonder, we see stretching away into the distance, sleeping peacefully in the shadows of these great mountains that lift their giant cliffs in majestic splendor above the storms, an hundred years from now will be dotted with cities, towns, villages, farms, and farm-houses, embowered in orchards and vineyards and surrounded by stock bearing meadows and verdant pastures, all forming the center of a great industrial and intellectual activity."

"That will never be possible until the colonies throw off the yoke of oppression. England is too jealous of the growing independent tendencies of her possessions in America to allow any such growth. Besides the Spaniards are in possession of the navigable rivers in this inland country and we would have to lick the devil out of them in order to get an outlet for commerce," answered Hugh Stearns, who was thinking of moving out to Robertson's settlement.

"I wouldn't mind seeing the Spaniards get a good thrashing, but I hardly think it would be a wise step to form a confederacy of our own just at present.

## In Point of Honor.

England will surely grant the demands of the colonies in a short time," spoke up Colonel Cecil Fairfax, a gentleman of His Majesty's colony, Virginia, who loved this tragic new world, but also held tenaciously to the traditions of his fathers. He was among the few who had hopes that the turbulent spirit of the colonists would be quelled without bloodshed, and that England would allow them their just rights.

"Never, so long as an embecile king sits upon England's throne and Parliament holds the reigns of government. Those arrogant Brittish Lords know not what justice is, or they would never impose an army upon us with such men as that scoundrel, Sussex, holding commissions in it," was said.

"Why, Henry, Captain Sussex has frequently been my guest and I have always thought him to be a perfect gentleman," exclaimed Colonel Fairfax.

"He is an arrogant, foppish scamp, sir,—a cheat and an adulterer," retorted the other hotly.

Especial attention is called to the next speaker. He was a man of about six feet, well knit, broad of chest, with muscles of iron and an eye as keen as an eagle's. His cap was of coon skin with the ringed tail dangling down behind; his breeches were of buck skin while a hunting shirt covered the upper part of his body. He had sat gazing into the forest until the name of Sussex was mentioned, when he suddenly became interested.

"I'll warrant his being a rascal, but he's got grit," he slowly said.

The former speakers looked wonderingly at him and waited some time as though expecting him to

## In Point of Honor.

explain. Getting no further remark, one asked:

"How do you know he's got grit?"

"Fought a duel with him last month," was the laconic reply.

"You did? Tell us about it," from Sevier.

"Well, there isn't much to tell—only if there is one of you fellows that thinks he hasn't got grit just tackle him for a fight."

"What kind of weapons did you use—swords?" was jokingly asked.

"Rifles."

"Rifles! Look here, John Kenton, you can not make us believe there is a man in all Virginia who is fool enough to stand up before your rifle!"

Kenton took a bite from a twist of tobacco, ground down on it three or four times, cleared his throat, spat a flood of ambeer between his fingers at an innocent bug, then adjusted himself to an easier position, while the others settled themselves for his story.

## JOHN KENTON'S STORY.

Well, you see, it was this way: You know Joe Perdue's cabin is the last as you strike into the forest going west on the Watauga trail. Joe is one of these hale fellows, well-met, and likes to make his visitors have a good time. As there are lots of game in the woods around Joe's clearing, many of those English officers go out to have a hunt with him. Sussex went out last month and it happened that I pulled up at the cabin the day of his arrival. Nothing would do them but I must join the hunt the next day.

## In Point of Honor.

That night, up to a late hour, Sussex told tales of his narrow escapes on the hunt of the wild boar in England, and how he had slain them. He's a good talker and had launched himself into a very interesting story when he was interrupted by the violent squeeling of one of Joe's pigs. We rushed out just in time to see a cat bound into the forest with a fat porker. It was immediately decided that we hunt cats the next day as this was the third raid on Joe's sty within the week.

Now I must tell you that Joe is very fond of pets and among his pets is a big black bear. The Englishman had not been in the house very long before that bear fell head-over-heels in love with him. It must have been Sussex's clothes, for he was decked in the gayest of hunting suits. Well sir, you could not keep that bear away from the Englishman. He loved him so he even wanted to hug him. Sussex took it good naturedly, however, and even allowed the bear to frolic and gambol around him without any undue excitement. When the bear would get too familiar he would gently shove it away as though he was afraid if he used force it would make Joe mad. Finally Joe tied bruin up and a short time after that we all went to bed.

Next morning, bright and early, we were up and ready for the hunt. It was agreed that when we struck the range we would separate and hunt the woods for three miles or more around the farm. I do not know what possessed me that morning, but the desire to hunt completely left me and I had an overwhelming curiosity to watch that Englishman. You see I was skeptical of those tales he had been

## In Point of Honor.

telling about the boar—and I followed him.

I had been following him for about an hour, I suppose, when I discovered that the bear was loose and was also on his trail. Just as I became aware of this fact Sussex stiffened up and brought his carbine to his arm-pit. Some twenty-five yards ahead of him I saw a cat scurrying up an elm. The cat reached a limb and there stopped, glaring down and waving its tail to and fro, as a cat will sometimes do. Sussex took careful aim.

Bang! went the gun, and the report showed the bear where Sussex was. With a grunt of joy bruin came lumbering forward, but Sussex certainly mistook his friendly intentions, for he dropped his gun and made a bee-line for the settlement.

Gentlemen, I am accounted a pretty average runner, but I could not catch that Englishman to tell him the truth, hard as I ran. He never stopped for anything but took logs and brush-heaps as they came. I could have followed his trail in the dark. I believe he would have actually outran that bear had he not, in jumping a fallen tree, caught his foot on a small limb, tripping himself in the air, and bringing him down flat on his stomach. Before he could arise the bear was upon him, with both feet between his shoulders, ready to stick a cold snout in his face the minute Sussex should raise his head. Slowly the Englishman raised his head from the dust, the most abject fear written upon his face. He would take a last look at his terrible adversary. Marvelous change—he saw the collar around bruin's neck.

"Damn me, this thing has gone far enough!" he

## In Point of Honor.

said, and with a bound he was on his feet. The kick he gave that unfortunate bear was enough to have broken several ribs.

Just then he saw me.

"Damn me, you are the cause of this! 'Twas a scullion trick, sir, concocted by the spoin of a scullion race! For this I will have your heart's blood!" and he stood transfixed, impotent, alternately scarlet with rage and white with the humiliating discovery of his useless fear.

Joe stepped up about this time and asked what was the trouble. I told him. That made the Englishman yet madder and he abused us both by calling us every name in the calendar. He said that we were descendants from a race of cut-throats and cowards, and there was not a gentleman in the whole country. He even went so far as to say there was not a man in the land who would face a gentleman in a fair fight.

Just think of it. Accusing an American of being afraid to fight. Why, we are born fighting. We tug the instinct in at our mother's breast. Some of my dearest friends have died fighting, and my brother sank beneath a tomakawk's blow. What did he know of fighting? Had he ever lain down at night with the feeling that, perhaps, the next morning he would wake up with a knife in his heart, or find his brains scattered about the floor? His statements were so ill-timed that I could not keep from laughing. Well sir, when I laughed that Sussex stepped up to me, quick like, and before I knew what he was up too, he struck me on the mouth with the back of his hand.

## In Point of Honor.

"There," he sneered, "can you BE insulted!" his features set awry to a sinister pattern.

I would have thrashed the life almost out of him then and there had it not been for Joe. He stopped me and said we would settle the affair the next day according to the code. Joe is a funny fellow, anyway, any way you take him.

Next day two of Joe's neighbors dropped in and they, respectively, agreed to act as our seconds. Joe appointed himself surgeon for us both. Some time before the appointed hour the surgeon and seconds held a council, and I noticed that before it broke up they seemed to be enjoying themselves vastly. Presently Sussex was called in and during the conversation which followed I heard him say something about rapiers, twice. Then Joe seemed to be explaining something and finally Sussex reluctantly agreed, and walked off.

I was then approached, and then I understood what had occasioned their suppressed mirth. They had agreed that nothing had occurred that was worth shedding blood over, and with my permission they would have a little more fun out of the Englishman. This did not suit me at all, for the force of that blow yet stung when I pressed my upper lip. After much persuasion, however, they prevailed upon me. Their plan was to use blackened gum balls instead of bullets, and at the crack of the guns I was to fall over and pretend that I was mortally wounded. Sussex wanted to use rapiers, but Joe had explained to him that his was the only one within twenty-five miles.

The place of meeting was in an opening on the

## In Point of Honor.

bank of a deep hole in that little spring branch that fronts Joe's cabin. At the appointed time we were all there—for we all went together. The distance was measured off and we took our places. A gun was handed to each.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?"

"Ready!" we both replied.

"One—two—three—fire!"

At the crack of the guns I keeled over and commenced groaning as if in mortal agony, at the same time holding both hands upon my stomach. Joe ran up and pretended to make a hurried examination. Up walked that Englishman, as cool as you please, and asked if I was seriously hurt.

"He's dying," answered Joe.

With that there was not any of us that could hold in longer, and a broad grin o'erspread each countenance. For a moment that Sussex stood livid. Then he mumbled something about the dead being buried, and before any of us could comprehend what he was going to do, he caught me by the feet and half drug, half flung me in that hole of water.

\* \* \* \* \*

The six men that have just before been mentioned was a surveying party returning from the survey of a tract of land granted to Colonel Cecil Fairfax for "services rendered" his majesty, George III, of England. Just what the services were his majesty's agent had not clearly defined, and Colonel Fairfax was at a loss to know. Later on he came to the conclusion that the grant was made in the nature of a bribe, but he knew nothing of this at present, so at the opening of this story we find him returning

## In Point of Honor.

from the survey and staking out of said claim—marveling all the while upon the sudden generosity of his liege sovereign.

The party had pitched their camp for the night upon a spur of the mountains overlooking a beautiful vale of what is now known as East Tennessee. It was here that John Sevier, over one hundred years ago, uttered the foregoing prophecy that we Tennesseans, of this day, have seen so profusely fulfilled, and which, had he been a man of more historical prominence, would have been handed down in the history of that great state as words immortal.

The low growl of Prince, Colonel Fairfax's dog, brought John Kenton suddenly to his feet the next morning. Silhouetted against an eastern sky of the early morn was a stalwart Indian, motionless, with both palms extended above his head in friendly fashion. He was clad in the costume of his race—that is, a breech cloth girdling his loins. At his feet lay a short rifle, such as the English were want to furnish their Indian allies, and an immense hatchet and knife of English manufacture were visible in his belt of wampun.

"Great Hatchet, by the great horn spoon!" exclaimed Kenton. "No other Indian on this American continent could have slipped this close to the nose of that dog."

"Ugh!" said the savage, "McGillivray pay big money for the scalp of my brother."

"Why, peace has been declared between the settlement and that half-breed devil."

"Greek chieftain is big liar! Two-faced! Pretend he loves Robertson to-day, to-night burn his

## In Point of Honor.

town and scalp his women and children."

By this time the whole camp was aroused and stood around listening to the conversation. A hurried consultation was held, and it was agreed to move on at once, as Great Hatchet had ran across the trail of a small war party the previous evening, and it was not safe for such a small band to remain in the neighborhood any longer than necessary.

We will not weary the reader by following that little caravan through that three hundred miles of tragic forest to their Virginia homes. In this day such a journey would hardly be thought of, on foot, or even on horseback. Yet in the days before the revolution, and even after, our forefathers traveled greater distances and thought nothing of it. Neither man nor devil could stop them in their undertakings. They were undaunted by the perils of the forest. Surrounded by wild beast and their more savage and deadly enemy, the Indian, they lived and had their being. They had the strength of perfect manhood, the tireless energy of children and their goal was a mighty civilization. They were the men who arose to the mastery of adverse environment. Grim warriors, plunging into the strife and colonizing a wilderness. They helped fertilize this glorious country of ours with their life blood—as did the Indian and the buffalo. Speak and think of them reverently.

Then a life was as a multitude; to-day a multitude is but a drop in the great ocean of humanity.

## CHAPTER II.

### TWO IMPERIAL LETTERS.

COLONEL FAIRFAX walked out on his portico and stretched himself. A feeling of contentment pervaded his whole being. There is nothing like a good meal at home to a man who has camped out two months, or even for a shorter time. The Colonel had arrived just in time for the noon meal, and having finished, he had adjourned to the portico to look over his mail, which had arrived during his absence.

Being interested in the happenings of the mother country, the Colonel tore the wrapper from the "Public Advertiser," a red hot political paper, published in London in the year 1774. He hastily glanced over the journal for the most important articles. Under the assumed name of "Junius" a gentleman of London was writing for this paper, and Colonel Fairfax was an interested and close reader of all his contributions. This "Junius" was a very iconoclastic writer; on several occasions bitterly denouncing the actions of Parliament, and waging war on several of its members. He had even written an open letter to the king, himself, to the vast annoyance of that august monarch. There were many heated arguments as to who this gentleman was, and so scholarly and so masterly were his letters that several were of the opinion that he was no other than the learned McCauley.

Even in America the speculation was rife as to

## In Point of Honor.

who this bold and brilliant writer was. His claim to the attention and admiration of the colonist was the fact that he had on several occasions attacked England's Colonial policy, although he believed that Great Britain had the right to levy taxes upon America. Further he had openly denounced Townsend, whom every loyal American had violently hated, pronouncing him a self-esteemed cockney, while the patronage of the King had turned his head. It had been Townsend's boast that England would tax the colonies whenever she pleased, and should they object, she would ram it down their throats at the mouth of a canon.

After scanning the paper over, the Colonel laid it aside for a more leisurely perusal. He then turned to a pile of letters. The first to claim his attention was one bearing the Imperial seal of England. Breaking the seal, he read:

To COLONEL CECIL FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA:  
SIR, GREETING:

No doubt you have seen an account, err this, of the supposed crime of one, Arthur Howard Noll, in which it is alleged that he murdered his wife and child. The papers contained a full account of the affair, as Noll was an officer of high rank in the English army, and stood in high esteem by both ladies and gentlemen at court.

Owing to legal complications it was thought best to defer the charge of murder and give preference to one of more vital importance to the welfare of the realm of England. Therefore, Noll has been tried before the highest tribunal of the land, (from which no decision can be revoked) and found guilty of treason. His sentence has been fixed at three

## In Point of Honor.

years penal service under one of His Majesty's subjects in an English colony.

Learning through the firm of Scovill & Scovill, merchants, that you "desire a man of intellect and business ability; one capable of taking charge of your affairs in the hour of need," we have taken the liberty of selecting the said Arthur Howard Noll for you. In the name of His Majesty, and the realm of England, this man is recommended to you.

Knowing you to be a man of steadfast loyalty to His Majesty's service, we believe you will take control of aforesaid Noll and allow him no further intercourse with the enemies of your king. As a proof of the high esteem in which your services are held, and your loyalty felt, His Majesty has just recently made you a grant of a large tract of land in the New World. Appreciating your industry and fortitude, I hope you will duly use your means and influence to colonize this tract.

The said Noll has been given transportation upon the Plymouth, a ship, as you know, plying between Liverpool and North America. He is to be placed in the charge of Scovill & Scovill's agents at Richmond, they to await your orders. This letter is sent upon the same ship.

Present my respects to your most gracious wife, also your noble son and most fair daughter. I, with many friends, hope to soon have the pleasure of your visits to England. Sir, I beg to remain your loyal friend and His Majesty's most humble servant,

FREDERICK NORTH,  
Premier of England.

Colonel Fairfax was almost struck speechless with amazement. While true that he had placed an order with Scovill & Scovill for a bond slave, yet here was a manner of securing one without precedent since the institution of penal servitude had been adopted in her colonies by England for her

## In Point of Honor.

criminals. There was a vague feeling of something unexplained about the matter. The spirit of intrigue permeated it. Yet to all seeming the letter was explanatory. But wait! There lay another letter. It also bore an Imperial seal—that of the Queen. Its contents, without the formal heading, were as follows:

MY DEAR FRIEND:

By good fortune I to-day learned of the banishment of one Arthur Howard Noll, and of his being placed in your charge. I furthermore learned upon what charge he was condemned (which was told you) and write this letter hoping to befriend one who has proven himself in every way worthy.

There are some things about the matter which are a mystery to Noll's friends, and which he alone can explain. I will give you, dear Cecil, a condensed account of the affair just as it happened, according to the best of my knowledge. In order to throw more light on the subject, I will relate a few incidents prior and just after the supposed homicide.

On last Thursday the King was subjected to an attack of his old malady of the brain, which was attributed by his physicians to over-worry. The Queen, greatly alarmed over his condition, and fearing that it meant his complete derangement, determined to seek the advice of a certain soothsayer that resides down near the Thames. I accompanied her. We disguised as burgesses and made the journey there in safety. But, when returning, two religious fanatics, or anarchists, evidently recognizing the Queen, suddenly sprang out upon us and would have slain us, had it not been for Howard Noll. He rushed forward to our cries for help, dashing one of the ruffians unconscious against the ground as he was about to strike the Queen, and severely wounding the other with his rapier.

## In Point of Honor.

The next day the Queen summoned him to the palace in order to more befittingly acknowledge the service rendered her. We learned, through a servant, that while awaiting an audience, Noll had the misfortune to make an enemy of Lord North, Premier of England. It happened in this way: Noll left word for the usher to call him from the library, having first sent in his name. While there, Lord North came in to look up some reference in regard to the law. The two men had never met. My Lord, mistaking Noll for an interloper, and furthermore overstepping the bounds of his authority, ordered him out. Noll paid no attention to the demand, of course. It was repeated. Getting no reply, North demanded:

"Fellow, will I be forced to spit you upon my sword!" at the same time drawing.

Quick as it takes to tell it, Noll was on his feet, and the rapiers clashed. Equally as quick, North's sword went flying across the room, and he was left defenseless. Noll went quietly over to where the blade lay, and picking it up, deliberately broke it across his knee.

"Sir, perhaps the pen is mightier than the sword in your case—as an instrument of torture," he remarked, just as the footman called him. The affair, I'm afraid, was unfortunate for Noll.

The next day Noll was sent to the Tower on the charge of murdering his wife and baby. He had been found sitting on the bedside, dazed, looking at his baby boy, whose brains had been dashed out against the bed-post. His wife, who had left him some two years ago, for a French profligate, lay dead on the floor with her neck broken. The marks of a man's fingers showed where he had gripped her on the arm. Since then the friends of Noll have repeatedly tried to hear the story from his lips, but have always been refused admittance to his cell. The only one, so far as we can learn, who has talked

## In Point of Honor.

with him since the terrible affair, was Granville, a close friend of the Prime Minister. Two days after Granville's visit the report came that Noll had escaped. Ten days after that the news reached us that he and his father had been overtaken, he recaptured, and his father killed.

As before stated, we to-day learned that he had been condemned to three years penal servitude in America on the charge of treason. Now, is not that very strange? Judged by the laws of England the crime of treason entails the penalty of death. If he was guilty, why this exception? Why was it that he was not tried before a jury of his peers upon the charge of murder? There is a mystery about the affair that we are unable to solve—a suggestion of intrigue.

You, dear friend, who have perhaps seen him by this time, look into his face and see if you think he is guilty of treason, or that other most foul crime.

It is the opinion of we, his friends, that he, knowing much of the connivings and intrigues that do so beset us here at court, was thought dangerous to the cause of England's enemies, and so exiled to penal service in the colonies. While we are powerless to aid him, yet we do beseech you, in all fairness, to treat him as a man and an equal and not as a slave. Our early associations with you (and I include the Queen with myself) have shown us what manner of man we ask this favor, and we believe it will not fall upon deaf ears. We feel sure that he can offer a satisfactory explanation of the tragedy, which cut off one of the brightest careers in England; and we further believe that he would have made the explanation had not some one high in authority, or possessing great influence, prevented it.

We, of the English court, learned to love Arthur Howard Noll while he was one of our members. The more thoughtful among us saw in him a man of no ordinary talents. He was studious and thought-

## In Point of Honor.

ful, as is very rare the case with one so nobly born. Even at his youthful age he was well versed in affairs of state and has frequently been put forward in the settlement of the most intricate diplomatic questions. In the army he was one of the few men for whom Clive had a profound respect. Surely it is not treasonable to fight for country, and make for that country the most noble sacrifices. Get him to tell you of the sacrifice which darkened his life, yet saved the honor of the House of Hanover, and, furthermore, saved England from what would have been a most disastrous war.

Of whatever other crime he may be guilty, there is one thing of which we are certain—he is not guilty of treason. His removal has either been instigated at the hands of England's enemies (now that she needs all loyal sons) or else those who are at the helm of our misguided old ship of state, think (because an enemy to them, an enemy to England) that he possesses too much knowledge of the critical state of affairs, and that it is safer to remove him for a short period. I tell you this, my friend, that you may understand the case as Noll's friends see it in England, and I hope you will act accordingly.

Until the King recovers from his present attack, we can do nothing. So in the name of that friendship which we bore one another while you were attending studies here, we, Her Majesty and Mary Bolingbroke, again beseech you to treat him as a man and an equal.

Here the letter closed. From amazement the expression on the Colonel's face changed to wonder. Here was an epistle bearing the seal of the King, requesting him to take charge of a man condemned for treason. There was another from a woman for whom he had once cherished a feeling of more than

## In Point of Honor.

friendship, asking him to receive kindly one of her friends. It was indeed a question of moment, one hard to decide. He picked up North's letter again, slowly reading and studying it, until he came to the phrase, "which I hope you will use your means and influence to colonize."

"Ilma! Ilma!" he almost shouted.

"Yes, Papa?" came from a silvery voice in the room.

"Come out here!"

A girl, just blossoming into womanhood, came out and approached his chair.

"Well, Papa?" she questioned

"Where is Robert?"

"Brother? why—er—O yes, he and Captain Sussex are out fowling in the marsh."

"Confound that boy, he is never here when I want him. Tell Beasley to come here, and bring quill and paper."

Soon Beasley made his appearance. He was a broad-shouldered, red-headed, heavy-set man, with a jaw like a steel trap. Colonel Fairfax was writing when he approached. Hastily sealing the missive, he thrust it forward to the overseer.

"You are to take this immediately to Scovill & Scovill at Richmond; so get ready for the journey."

"Yes, sir," turning to go.

"And, Beasley!"

"Yes, sir," facing again.

"They will place in your charge a man whom you will bring safely here."

"Yes, sir," again facing to leave.

"And Beasley."

## In Point of Honor.

"Yes, sir."

"You are in no wise to let him escape, but treat him kindly."

"Yes, sir."

"And, Beas—— I say, Beasly!"

"Yes, sir."

"Odds! Zounds, sir! do not be in such a hurry to be off! You are to treat him like you would—er—like you—er— damn it, sir, you are to treat him like you would a gentleman!"

"Yes, sir."

Mrs. Fairfax appeared in the doorway.

"Why, Cecil, with whom in the world are you quarreling?"

He regarded her with quiet dignity for a moment.  
"Madam, I never quarrel. I sometimes fight—" he pondered his words— "and when I do there's bloodshed."

## CHAPTER III.

### IN POINT OF HONOR.

**E**N old Colonial homestead in Virginia. An ideal place for a man to pass his days. Nestling there on an elbow of the James, with acres of waving corn and tobacco in the rear and a beautiful, peaceful woodlot in front. Yonder to the right of the rear is a row of negro cabins, and just to the left, the granaries and immense tobacco sheds. A man walks out on the portico and a negro servant follows with a bottle of wine. Look at the man. His manners are simple, yet included in that simplicity are sincerity, honor, and elegance. It has been said, and justly, perhaps, that no man is a hero to his servant. Yet there never was a man who more enjoyed heartfelt admiration than the old-time negroes used to manifest toward their masters, where those masters were the true types of chivalrous gentlemen.

What of chivalry? It is dead. The grace of a day dies with that day. The deeds of the warrior passes into the books of history; reality passes into a reminiscence; love culminates in a hazy dream; to-day our memory flickers with the traditions of the past.

Fairfax Hall was a delightful country home, forty miles from the city of Richmond. Isolated from the struggling tides of life; free in sky, in air, and landscape; in hill, and slope, and dell; Cecil Fairfax was want to say that God in His flight across the universe had stooped and with His infinite hand had

## In Point of Honor.

made beautiful the rough places. No palace on earth, no tenement and vesture this side of heaven, holds the treasure of such happiness as the divine plan made possible in the old homesteads of the Colonial period and the anti-bellum days. They made beautiful pictures, but the pictures faded when the South laid down her arms.

Colonel Fairfax was a man, although tracing his lineage back through a long line of England's kings, yet he was distinctly and impressively an American. He belonged to that class of Americans who set up for themselves an aristocracy of their own—separate and distinct from the old school. The world has never seen men like them. They rode well, hunted well, read well, managed the affairs of life well, fought well, and died well.

During the absence of Beasley the Colonel had passed a crisis in his life. The two letters from England had been eye-openers. They had set him to thinking. Even in granting a favor the mother country was adding a burden. For did not Lord North plainly invite him to use his means and influence to colonize the tract of land just recently granted him? And for what? That England's source of revenue might be increased. The policy of the home government had ever been a selfish one toward the colonies—allowing free scope in development, yet setting up arbitrary measures when once developed. Burdens were added to burdens until they were already greater than the American people would bear. And the end was not yet.

Colonel Fairfax reasoned thus: What if his house had always been to the front in fighting the

## In Point of Honor.

battles of the king? This was the land of his birth; he expected to die here, and his children after him. Was a man forced to sacrifice himself and posterity upon a precedent? In point of honor it was his plain duty to use his means, and influence, and intellect to help lift the burden from the land. When a Fairfax came to a decision, he generally acted by it. Colonel Cecil was a Fairfax, every inch of him. He would no longer hesitate, but would take up the cause of his country, as he long since should have done.

"America for Americans," he thought. "The nationality of America against the nationalities of the world. The lightning has flashed and the thunders will resound. Whether right or wrong the game is on and must be played."

His thoughts were interrupted by his wife and daughter joining him.

"Cecil, John Kenton was here this morning and says that the Indians are becoming troublesome out at the Watauga settlement."

"Odds! Zounds! can not a man enjoy his own in peace? It has not been six months since John Sevier got those copper-colored heathens to agree to a treaty of peace in which they not only admitted to not molest the settlers any more, but ceded to them a large tract of land lying along the western borders of the mountains."

"It is not the nature of an Indian to remember a treaty longer than a month, and it seems that the settlers would have long since learned not to trust them. Your grant is in that ceded territory, is it not?" asked Mrs. Fairfax.

## In Point of Honor.

The Colonel sat, pondering, and before he replied Ilma broke the continuity of the conversation by asking:

"Papa, do you think it probable that the thirteen colonies will rebel?"

"In all probability they will unless England concedes to them their just rights, which is very doubtful at present."

"Why, Cecil, I thought you were of the opinion that England had, and of a right, should, tax the colonies?"

"I was, and am yet of that opinion, madam, but I draw the line when taxation goes beyond the bounds of reason. It is not right for England to make the colonies make up the deficit in her depleted treasury brought on by her French and Indian wars. Besides, for the last few years we have been forced to support a British army on American soil."

"Well!" and there was profound astonishment in Mrs. Fairfax's voice; "I never once dreamed that a Fairfax would prove a traitor to his king!"

The Colonel winced.

"I'll admit," he said, "that judged by the laws of England my language would be accounted treasonable; but in point of honor, and justice, it is not. You see, madam, it is altogether according to the position in which a man is placed, and whether a question touches him directly—at least, it has been that way with me. Up to a year or so ago—thanks to the great influence of my family in England—I was not materially effected by this taxation. Consequently, I gave very little thought to the question.

## In Point of Honor.

In fact, I thought England was asking help for the hour, as it were. But recently I have awakened to a full understanding of the danger as our most thoughtful gentlemen see it. It is not right to tax any body of men without them having a voice in the matter. When men suffer taxation without representation, they may not directly place the shackles upon their own persons, but they are bending the servile knee for posterity."

"Papa, if the rollicking old shade of great grandfather, Wathrock Fairfax, could hear you talk to-day he would kick the lid off his coffin," and a silvery peal of laughter followed. Then Ilma added more thoughtfully: "Only I feel sorry for that little settlement on the Watauga if the colonies do rebel."

"Why so?" the Colonel asked.

"Because, this morning Captain Sussex said that if it came to an actual conflict, fifty thousand Indian warriors will be enlisted across the Alleghany Mountains to fall upon the rear of the colonists, while the regular army would subjugate the sea-board. If that be so, the first to suffer will be that little settlement."

"Captain Sussex is a fool—an arrogant British fool!" the Colonel hotly exclaimed. "When does he expect to rejoin his regiment?"

"We do not know—surely his stay here is welcome?" put in Mrs. Fairfax.

"O, certainly, only he and Robert are spending too much of their time at cards and dice. I observe that they are almost constantly playing—except what time Sussex is with you, are they not, Ilma?"

"Why, Captain Sussex says that all the English

## In Point of Honor.

gentry indulge at hazard," ventured Mrs. Fairfax before her daughter could reply.

"Madam, I do not disapprove of a game of chance among gentlemen, where the stake is low and the gentlemen are honest. In fact, I rather enjoy an occasional tilt, myself. Money staked at hazard is like age to wine—it adds spice."

"Then what possible objection can you have to the young gentlemen playing?"

"Nothing, particularly—only from the repeated inroads upon my purse of late, I wot me that the game has been deucedly one-sided."

"Surely, Papa, you do not think Captain Sussex would cheat! Governor Denmore, only at his last visit here, told me that the Captain was from one of the best families in England, was considered one of the best swordsmen in the army, and was highly respected by——"

"Which all may be a fact—but, my daughter, a thorough knowledge of fencing, or even a polished manner, is no safe index to an honorable character."

The pet hobby of Mrs. Fairfax was English aristocracy. She longed to take her place in it. Her ambition was to see her daughter the queen of London society. To her, the peerage was the summit from which men deteriate, and to be outside the pale was to be well along the road of deteriation. The urbanity of Captain Sussex, and his vivid accounts of the London social circle, had thrilled her; and while he was not such a brilliant match——She could hold in no longer:

"I am sure that that which is befitting an English

## In Point of Honor.

nobleman would not disgrace the son of a man who has turned traitor to his king!" and there was a world of sarcasm in her voice and manner.

"Madam, it has been my observation of late, that you have British Lords on the brain——"

"CECIL FAIRFAX! I NEVER——" but he was not to be checked:

"Odds! Zounds! it impresses me that if a thousand sensible American ideas were floating around, and in their midst one little fool lonely wiggle-tail of a British idiocy, some women would get away from the ideas as being too big game for their guns, and set sail for the idiocy."

A woman will smile to cover a heartache; she will bear uncomplainingly the brunt of life; she will rock the cradle of a Washington, or a Lincoln, or a McKinley, yet in a dispute she will have the last word, for that is a woman's way. There might have been a battle-royal, for Mrs. Fairfax was a spirited lady and did not easily capitulate, but the measured strokes of oars on the James attracted the attention of all. Soon a cutter was beached at the landing, and Beasley alighted, immediately followed by Arthur Howard Noll.

"Your bond slave, I presume," questioned Mrs. Fairfax.

"The same, Madam," answered the Colonel.

"It would be more seemly if a traitor HARBORED the cut-throat condemned by the laws of a king than appear as that criminal's bond-master," she said, turning fiercely and repairing to the kitchen, where she was soon busy instructing the cook in preparing a brandy sauce for a plum pudding, a favorite dish

## In Point of Honor.

of the Colonel. Thus it is that the love of woman will slip in through the loop-holes if not allowed to enter at the open door.

Ilma observed her father as he awaited the approach of the two men. Although he had not disclosed the contents of the two letters to his family, yet the ladies had stolen a reading of them and had discussed as to what would be the outcome.

The men mounted the steps. Colonel Fairfax stood at dignified ease; Ilma was intently examining a honey-suckle that clung to the veranda.

"Sir, your man," spoke Beasley, and fell back a step or two.

"I presume, sir, that I have the pleasure of seeing before me, Arthur Howard Noll?"

The face that was lifted to the Colonel might have been chiseled out of marble for its Stoic impassiveness.

"If it be a pleasure for a bond-master to see his future slave, then, sir, you have."

A curlew uttered his call in the meadow. The hum of a spinning wheel in a negro cabin stopped with a whir. There was silence for the space of a minute. Then the horn sounded for six o'clock, and its answering echoes were taken up by the negroes in the fields, while the welkin rang with their resonant yoedle.

"Beasley, show Mr. Noll to the room up-stairs, next to that of Robert's. See that his supper is served there." Then turning to Noll, the Colonel continued: "Sir, I will see you in the library immediately after dining."

The hopes and ambitions of men are but as bub-

### In Point of Honor.

bles made by children at play. We rejoice to see them grow and glisten in myriad tints of amber, and purple, and gold, but when they float away and break—our hearts sob.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INDIAN'S STORY.

**T**EN days later Mrs. Fairfax and Captain Sussex came out of the library and stood in the hall for a moment, talking quite confidentially, at last walking out on the front porch.

"What, in your opinion, Captain Sussex, is the noblest pursuit of woman?"

"Lady Fairfax, if I might be allowed to judge upon so delicate a matter, I would venture to say that the noblest pursuit of one woman is an honest man —like myself."

"Look here, sir, I will have none of your foolishness; besides, I would have you understand that self-esteem and such bold effrontery as you have just displayed, are but poor accomplishments, and are hardly pardonable?" retorted the lady, assuming a severe tone, yet at the same time showing that she understood and was not displeased with the young man's meaning.

"But to be serious," she continued, "I want your advice. The girls of America are so different from those of England. Their tendencies are different. They are not content with the drawing room, and those little innocent amusements, but must follow the men in their rougher sports and pastimes. Now I have tried to raise Ilma up to a proper appreciation of her social position, but——"

"Madam, I assure you, your daughter is the fair-

## In Point of Honor.

est blossom in this beautiful land of wild roses."

Lady Fairfax was pleased—what lady would not be?

"Do you really think so, Captain Sussex? Do you think she would grace one of your English drawing rooms—do you?"

"Do I!" and there was a touch of deep sincerity in his voice, "I think she would put to shame Aurora, herself!"

"I will be honest, and say that I am pleased to hear you say that. Every mother's heart swells with pride at hearing words of praise of her child—and especially from such a gentleman. Although I say it, as perhaps ought not, yet I do think Ilma a comely lass, and——"

"Lady Fairfax, I will stake my reputation upon the statement; such a face, such a form, such little, dainty feet are not to be found in all England——"

She laughingly shoved him from her:

"Go away, young man, I do not understand you. Go prattle your nonsense to Ilma—perhaps, she may. You will find her down on the river gathering water lilies."

He gracefully lifted his hat to her, made a sweeping bow, and went out to join her daughter in gathering the water lily—a flower which is a fit emblem of what a woman's life should be—pure and white.

Ah, mothers, fond parents, you who would prone select for daughters their liege lords and masters, stop and investigate before you choose a man who would place his reputation upon a die—he may be profited in losing.

Captain Sussex went gayly down the path that

## In Point of Honor.

led to the river. He hummed a popular air of the day, and his heart was glad. Perhaps, had he seen the face of the Indian warrior that was peering at him from a small clump of bushes, as he passed, his manner would not have been so gay. After the Captain passed the Indian stealthily followed. The road led to a little bay-like projection in the river, where it forked, one path going around the bay and the other leading down the stream. Captain Sussex hesitated for a moment as to which path to take, and then decided on the one around the bay. The Indian, seeing this, made a circuitous turn, running at the top of his speed so as to intercept the Englishman at the last curve toward the stream. So intent was the native on arriving first that he did not notice the Captain stop, then turn, retrace his steps, and take the other path—having caught sight of Ilma at a point down the river instead of in the direction in which he was going. He soon joined the young lady, while the Indian hastily threw himself in a bunch of tall cut-grass to await the coming of his prey.

"Fair lady, may I have a seat in your birch bark canoe?" Sussex asked, as he stood looking down at Ilma from his position on the bank.

She was just the airiest, fairest slip of a thing; a knot of water lilies tucked in her hair, under a hat tilted up on one side with the jauntiest, sweetest air, while the lace at her throat fluttered with a grace that no art can understand. She looked up, and her eyes met his in saucy light.

"You may, Captain Sussex, if you promise not to dip the boat."

### In Point of Honor.

O, the winning witchery of some women's smiles! No artist could duplicate them, unless he could filch from nature and place upon his palette the tint of a kiss.....What man, seeing her there, would not worship? Captain Sussex quickly took his place—kneeling in the boat at her feet.

"Ilma," he said, "fairest of all these lilies, I love you. Can you not see that on my soul's book, laid bare to you, that love is written on every page? Ah, how your presence fills my pulses! Since first I saw you, I loved you; and when from you, you have ever floated before my vision, beautiful, shadowy, ever holding out a small white hand beckoning me to a sweeter influence. Yes, with all my soul I love you.....And the tender, loving words I have prepared for, and the songs I made.....But to-day, my sweet, your beauty mocks my praise!"

She put up a hand to check him, while the other sought her throat, just as though she were trying to swallow her heart and was afraid she would fail. His words thrilled her; his passion mastered her; she knew not what to do.....A twig snapped! A man was walking in the path by the river. His head was bowed low, and his hands were locked firmly behind him. Apparently, he was unconscious of other presence.

"Since when has my father's bond-slave been allowed the privilege of prowling about the premises; and by what authority, and by what excuse, sir, do you interrupt the privacy of his daughter's ramble?"

The man started quickly at her voice, and raised his head in time for her to note the poignant outlines

## In Point of Honor.

of despair. Their eyes met. Hers glanced defiance and anger; his unveiled the wretchedness, the pent-up misery of a soul. His face was like unto a battlemented wall upon which utter despair and indomitable will waged unceasing combat. She saw, and understood, and a great pity filled her heart and took the place of her anger.

"Pardon me, Mistress Fairfax," he said, "I had forgotten that you were in the world."

Then he resumed his walk along the river. Soon he came to where the road forked, but he kept straight ahead, on around the little bay. Two eyes as keen as an eagle's saw him turn the curve, and watched him as he approached the bunch of tall cut-grass.

Sussex and Noll were almost of a size, and, to-day, similarly dressed. The shadows of the cypress helped carry out the other deceptions. Noll slowly approached the spot where the savage lay concealed. Now he was there. With a cat-like spring, the Indian was before him, a knife in his upraised hand. The next spring was but a second later, but in making it the native almost lost his balance by his foot being on a rolling stick. By the time he could recover, Noll was on guard—the upraised wrist descended into bands of steel. A fierce encounter followed.

The two men were perfect specimens of manhood. The Indian was one of the most powerful chiefs of the six nations; but his opponent was a trained athlete with muscles of iron. For ten minutes the battle went silently on, until both men were panting for breath. It was the Indian that brought the conflict

## In Point of Honor.

to a close. Quickly relaxing his muscles, he sprang backward, almost bringing Noll down to his knees.

"Hugh! Indian heap fooled—thought my brother was the pale face chief!"

Noll was too near out of breath to reply. The sudden relaxing of the Indian's hold had had the effect of almost completely exhausting him, and he stood wholly at the other's mercy—every minute expecting the savage to take advantage of the situation. The Sachem quietly assumed a posture of ease, however, and by the time Noll could comprehend the turn of affairs, their attention was attracted by John Kenton and Robert Fairfax, who were coming up the river from the direction of the King's Inn. Kenton took in the situation at a glance:

"Been trying a fall out of each other?" he asked.

"Indian heap fooled!"

"It seems that this dusky savage mistook me for an enemy, and was about to reap his vengeance upon my innocent head when he discovered his mistake. I'll warrant, though, that he will not soon forget the encounter."

The muscles around the red-skin's mouth relaxed: "My brother is little, but as strong as the leaping panther—heap fool the Great Hatchet."

"Whom did you take him to be?" asked Robert.

"Sussex, the pale face chief."

"What the devil has Sussex done to you that you should want to murder him!" demanded Robert, quickly approaching the Indian in a threatening like manner. Great Hatchet stood as firm as a statue, never moving a muscle. After Robert had fallen back a step or two, he deigned to reply. His story,

## In Point of Honor.

being fully interpreted, was in words, something like this:

"Listen, young man, and your ears shall drink no lie. My English name is Waunatoncah, mighty chief of the Massawomekes, fiercest tribe of the six nations. My people call me 'Great Hatchet' because of the bigness of my tomahawk. My people love me, and honor me, and have followed me on many grand hunts and in many great battles. My tribe is the grandfather of nations and came from the land of the setting sun. Listen! Once I led my people on a hunt to the 'dark and bloody ground.' While there I met Onewah, a beautiful maiden of the Choctahs. She was like the doe, possessing the slenderness of the willow, the sweetness of the wild flower, the frolicksomeness of the dancing sunbeam, and tripping about as light as a feather. Waunatoncah loved Onewah with a mighty love, and when she spoke it was like liquid moonlight to his heart. I woed her with many presents and soft caresses, and won her. Then I took her to the land of the falling river, to the home of my fathers; and there we were happy. She tended my maize, while I led my people on the hunt and in battle. Many were the scalps I had to show her, and the valorous stories I told her on my returns; and she did love to listen. Then, one day, I found Sussex. He had been hurt by a wounded roe-buck. Waunatoncah, the Indian, took him to his wigwam and made for him a bed of softest rushes, and spread over it the buffalo robes and deer skins. Onewah brought him food and administered unto him. There he stayed for many moons, until well enough to return to his peo-

## In Point of Honor.

ple. Sussex is a pale face chief, and the wigwams of his people were only a day's journey from those of my people.....The days passed, and winter was coming. I called my people together and we held a council. Then we went upon a hunt for the bison, that my people might have meat for winter. Sussex came, and finding me away, he woed Onewah with soft caresses and stories of the pale face. He passed a spell upon her and took her heart from her Indian lover, and she followed him to the wigwams of his people. The old women and the maidens told me, and my heart grew dark and heavy like the clouds darken the glistening river. I rocked myself in the lonely solitude of my wigwam, and my people beat themselves—and wept. Then the North wind came and cycled o'er the trees and withered the rushes, and filled the air with snow like flakes of ashes. The Indian was forced to stay in his lodge. But there was no Onewah to knead my bread and make my cakes. Then the South wind came and brought the spring—and with it came Onewah. Sussex had left her; grew tired and left her, and she, broken-hearted, had returned to my people.....Now listen! According to an ancient custom of the Massawomekes, a woman guilty of adultery must be stoned to death. So when my people heard that she had come, they gathered together, and each one picked up a stone as they came. She saw, and understood, and her head bent low, she wept.....The husband must cast the first stone, and then the others, until the whole tribe has passed. I had not the heart to hit her, so my stone passed harmless by. And then I heard the thud upon the soft flesh—and,

## In Point of Honor.

O, the bitter cry of anguish! It stirred my heart to vengeance—there before the tribe of my people I swore to have vengeance. The land is not so broad, the waters are not so deep, but what I will follow him, and plunge my knife in his heart that the dogs and the wolves may lick up his life blood. I have spoken!"

## CHAPTER V.

ARTHUR HOWARD NOLL.

**T**HIS was just as Robert Fairfax had surmised. At an early stage of the game he detected Captain Sussex cheating. He would have never noticed the Englishman slipping the cards under the table had he been less vigilant. The very boldness of the swindle, and Robert's implicit confidence heretofore, had blinded him to the fact that he had been fleeced and cheated before to-night. Furthermore, Robert noticed that Sussex was drinking heavily—more than his wont—and as he, Robert, was much the stronger drinker, he encouraged it, in the hopes that Sussex would become more bold, expose himself hopelessly, and thus afford an opportunity for an open denouncement.

"Come, here, Caesar, bring more wine. The Captain leaves tomorrow and we will make a night of it! Here, fill up our pipes again with the natural leaf—that which is perfumed with the oil roses!"

Captain Sussex rapidly shuffled the ivory leaves together; dealt Robert three cards, two to himself, two to Robert, and then three to himself. Robert noticed that he dexterously slipped the ace of hearts from the bottom of the deck to his lap as he laid the cards upon the table.

"The pipe to sooth man's troubled thoughts, Captain Sussex, but that which touches the hearts of men is wine and women."

"You are right, Robert—I pass."

## In Point of Honor.

"So will I—a nice jack-pot we have here, Captain."

"Lovely, Robert, one calculated to make the game interesting."

It was Robert's time to deal. He very carelessly put the cards together and passed them out.

"Luck's against me to-night—I pass again," said the Captain.

"The winner of this pot can purchase his lady-love a present that will please her vastly," answered Robert, as he put up his anti.

Captain Sussex now took charge of the cards, spending much time over them, all the while carrying on a running conversation with young Fairfax. A pause was made by Caesar entering with the wine and pipes.

"We will not need you any more to-night, Caesar—this bottle will be enough."

Had Robert been less attentive to his own wine cup he would have noticed that the Captain was emptying part of his wine in the cuspidore as he would stoop over to clear his throat. The trick was a bold one, but bold tricks were what had carried the Englishman through many a time before.

The game was called "draw poker," and possessed as great fascination as that of dice. When played between men of honor it was one wholly of luck and required no extra skill; but the rascal could easily use it to his purpose. This Robert knew and, therefore, chose it in preference to that of dice. Since hearing Waunatoncah's story he was convinced that his father's words were well-timed when he told him to beware of the Englishman. Therefore, he patiently awaited the opportunity to thoroughly hu-

## In Point of Honor.

miliate the Captain by exposing his double dealing, and to up-braid him for the heartless manner in which he had returned the Indian's kindness.

The time came. Robert noticed Sussex slip the ace of clubs with the other purloined fellow. Dropping a card as if by accident, Robert shoved back his chair to pick it up, at the same time covertly watching the actions of his opponent. Grasping two of the legs, he quickly drew the table toward him, raising his head at the same time. Sussex was caught in the very act of exchanging the cards. Robert stood up, fixing his eye upon the Englishman with a chill glance, his whole attitude expressing deepest scorn.

"Ah, Captain Sussex is at his old tricks again—abusing the hospitality of his friend!"

"What do you mean, sir?" and a flush mounted the Captain's face—partly anger, partly chagrin.

"I should think a man drawing the princely salary given the officers in the army of a king would not have to replenish his purse by unscrupulous methods! Surely I am mistaken in what my eyes have seen; they certainly tell me false."

Captain Sussex had partly regained his composure.

"Scullion," he spat, "think you that your company was what I sought? A man, if he be a man, should seek the association of those that profit him intellectually. Think you that you are my equal socially or mentally? Does the falcon stoop to mingle with the stupid storks, except to——"

Robert put out his hand——

"Does the gentleman carry in his heart a lust so

## In Point of Honor.

foul, a desire so unquenchable, that he must enter the wigwam of an untutored savage, who has succored him, and, like the base usurper that he is, take that which cannot be returned? Does the man of honor steal the heart of a woman, who is another's, and desert her in her unseasonable hour? What would the officers of your mess say if they knew, Captan Sussex? Faugh!"—Robert made a savage burlesque at homage—"Captain William Henry Sussex, Lord in the realm of England, a cheat, a thief, and an adulterer!"

The Captain's eyes flashed bitterly; the color of unconquerable passion flushed his face; his breath came thick.

"Fool," he hissed, "you force me to silence you in your own room!"

Quick as a flash the Captain's rapier was out and he made a desperate lunge at the other's heart. The table was all that prevented the ending of young Fairfax's life then and there. In the lunge, Sussex's leg came in contact with it, consequently swerving his aim, so that the weapon glanced a rib.

Robert had not calculated the duplicity of the man with whom he had to deal. He hardly thought that, smarting under the humiliation of discovery, the man would allow his anger to so overmaster him as to attempt his life. But he had no time to think; Sussex was preparing for another lunge. Picking up a chair as a shield, Robert began making a retreat. Sussex was between him and the door leading into the hall and his only means of escape was through the door connecting his with Noll's room. He stepped quickly backward and tried to open it,

## In Point of Honor.

but it was fastened. When Colonel Fairfax had assigned the adjoining room to Noll, Mrs. Fairfax ordered the door connecting them nailed up.

A low fiendish laugh greeted Robert's effort. Sussex felt sure of his man now and would take his time. A murderous gleam was in his eye as he warily approached his victim to avoid the sweep of the chair. Robert's eyes were continually sweeping the room as if looking for some suitable weapon of defense. Finally his eye, watchful yet wary, fell upon his sword stick lying upon the foot of the bed (the which no gentleman of that day was without.) 'Twas but the work of a moment to get it and wheel at guard. Sussex hardly had time to grasp the meaning of what had happened before Fairfax was upon him with the fury of a tiger.

But was not he, Sussex, the much better swordsman? Many had been the time that he had met Robert with the foils and bested him. Besides he had deceived Robert into drinking more wine than usual—in order that he might be more easily gulled at cards. With some men, however, wine may sap the very vitals, yet not befuddle the brain. Such a man was Robert Fairfax. The more wine the clearer his judgment and steadier his nerve. He fenced to-night as he had never fenced before.

Thrust! Parry! Thrust! Parry!—neither man gaining the advantage. The confidence which Sussex manifested at first gradually diminished and he settled down to fight like a man who had met his equal. Deftly, swiftly they fought; step by step they crossed and recrossed the room, and the longer they fought the more murderous the conflict be-

## In Point of Honor.

came. Each man knew that it was a fight to the death.

Listen! Some was trying the fastened door. Sussex heard it. He started at the sound, and almost lost guard. A shadow of fear came creeping over his face and into his eyes.

"Curse, you," he hissed, "the devil's own trick is in your steel to-night!"

Then he added:

"You scullion, if I cannot fix you one way, then the other," throwing himself behind the table at the time. Robert was surprised, but before he could press the attack, Sussex had rapidly shifted his rapier and drawn from his bosom an army pistol. Thrusting it forward until the muzzle was in three feet of the other, he fired. The flash almost set Robert's clothing on fire, and with a groan he sank to the floor, clutching at the wound in his breast.

CRASH!

The connecting door flew into splinters. Arthur Howard Noll stood upon the threshold. A glance sufficed to show him what had happened. Picking up Robert's fallen weapon he stepped quickly forward. Sussex made as if to leave the room by the hall door. Noll would spit him through the sword-arm with his blade—a rasp of steel greeted his effort. Sussex's parry was followed up by a vicious thrust; then a duel ensued, which for fierceness and murderous intent, has had few equals.

For some time Noll was kept busy fighting on the defensive, but after a time his tactics evidently puzzled his opponent, for Sussex soon began to fight more cautiously and coolly. Each man was feeling

## In Point of Honor.

for the other's strength. "This is not your quarrel," said Sussex. "Will you force me to add another victim to my list to-night?"

"Yes, if you possess the skill," and Noll's touch grew firmer and more aggressive. A deadly light shown from his eye and manner. It seemed, somehow, that he had known this man all his life, and that they had ever been sworn enemies. An intense hatred welled up in his breast, and a deadly resolve to pierce the other's heart took possession of him. By that subtle instinct which all swordsmen possess, Sussex felt this, and settled himself to the sword-play of his life. With the fury of despair he threw himself into the fight, and Noll was again on the defensive. Sussex was gradually forcing him back on the table. In making a quick step backward, Noll came in contact with it, and for a moment he was badly guarded. Like a flash of lightning Sussex's blade came darting forward, but in his too intense desire to end the fight, his aim was awry once more, and only a slight flesh wound was the result.

The touch of the steel acted upon Noll like a spark touched to a keg of powder. He now forced the fight with such vehemence that Sussex was compelled to fall back. So fierce and rapid were Noll's passes that almost a constant circle of flame was drawn from the two weapons by their contact. Harder and harder he pressed Sussex. Ever more dazzling grew his tactics. Sussex stood at bay for a moment, fighting without confidence and nervously. A revelation of avenging skill was before him, and he realized that his only chance was to make a dash for it. Closer and closer he fought his way

## In Point of Honor.

to the shattered door. Now they were fighting directly over the body of Robert. Then an unexpected interruption occurred. The door leading into the hall was thrown open and a woman's voice, vibrating with anger—partly fear—demanded:

"For shame, gentlemen!—why all this hubbub?"

Both men stepped back and turned toward her. It was then that she saw the body on the floor between them. With a low anguished cry she sank beside it and tenderly lifted the head into her lap.

"My God," she faltered, "who has done this!"

Quick as a flash a fiendish, cunning thought entered Captain Sussex's head. To think was but to speak:

"Your father's bond slave has murdered your brother, and would kill me," he said.

Astounding!

Robert stirred. With a last effort he lifted himself upon his left elbow, and pointing with the index finger of his right hand at Sussex, he said:

"LIAR! THIEF! ADULTERER! MURDERER!"

The effort was his last—he fell back gasping. Captain Sussex realized that all was lost, and with a bolt, he was through the door, down the steps, and into the darkness.

"Follow him!" commanded Ilma.

Noll bounded after him—but too late. Fear had added speed to Sussex's feet, and he had reached the river and shoved off into mid-stream before Noll could come up. There was nothing left in which to follow, so Noll was left to no other recourse but to wend his way back to the house to lend a helping hand. He found the negroes all huddled up in the

## In Point of Honor.

great hall, their eyes rolling about and themselves the very picture of superstitious and awed fear. In passing Mrs. Fairfax's room he saw old "Mammy Dinah" standing crooning over her mistress, who lay sobbing across the foot of the bed. Noll then went slowly up the stairs. Ilma was yet sitting with her brother's head in her lap, while with tender caresses she smoothed the tresses of his hair back from his temples. He took her gently by the arm and told her to go to her mother, while he, with the help of the servants, would lay out the body.

"Let me stay with him just a little while longer," she said. "O, how can I give you up, my brother!"

And then she looked up and saw the deep well of sympathy from his soul, and her woman's heart gave way to tears. Half leading, half supporting, he took her from the scene and saw her enter her mother's room.

How sad it is to lose a friend or a relative in death. But did you ever think of how much sadder it is to lose a friend who yet lives—a country that yet exists—but which is no longer your country, no more your friend, but perhaps your enemy? The loss of a friend or a relative in death is a misfortune; the rupture of a kindred tie is a tragedy.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE VIGIL OF A NIGHT.

COLONEL FAIRFAX was away attending a call meeting of the Virginia House of Burgesses, and Beasley, his over-seer, was off after a runaway slave. There were no men on the place except the negroes and they were so badly frightened as to be almost worthless—Caesar being the one exception. With the assistance of Caesar, Noll placed the body on the bed, and then went to the stables, saddled Robert's mare, and rode rapidly over to Henry Kenton's, the father of John. He knew that the hunter was at home, and his object was to get him to go post-haste in the cutter for the Colonel. It being only a mile over to the Kenton farm, the two men were soon back, and within an hour the boat was manned by slaves and John Kenton was being rowed rapidly down the James. Noll saw to everything being made ready for the departure and watched the boat until it was lost in the darkness. He then turned toward the house in order to dress the body for burial. This over, he and Caesar took up the vigil of the night.

For some time the negro sat bolt up-right, his eyes looking like two balls of cotton in the faint flicker of the candle light. A negro, however, is like a child—let him become still and silent and he is soon fast asleep. Caesar was not an exception, although perfectly devoted to every member of the

### In Point of Honor.

Fairfax family—Robert being his especial charge since the young man's infancy.

Silence!

Noll was left alone to the sombre, moody cells of unlucky thought. For perhaps an hour, he battled against it, but gradually the spirit of brooding crept over him and finally he was lost to everything save thoughts as they chased each other into his excited brain. Robert was at rest upon a couch in the center of the room, with a sheet thrown over him for a shroud. Constantly darting in and out among the tumultuous actions of Noll's brain, was the picture of a man laying aside the coronet for the sable cap of a skull. After many hours of this fevered action his thoughts became based upon things tangible.

A flood of memory enveloped him. Now he was back in a bungalow in India, and had retired for the night. Sleep would not come, however, and he lay tossing and restless. A sound as of a cat scratching on the bamboo floor catches his ear. Cautiously peering from his curtained bed he saw a faint glimmer of light through a crack, and then he knew what it was and he lay back in bed, pretending sound sleep. Soon the noise ceased. Then he saw a man's head cautiously appear up through the floor; then the shoulders; then the entire body. With a cat-like tread the Mahratta approached the dresser. He picked up a locket and several other pieces of jewelry, and, stealthily approaching the bed, he began taking off a seal ring——With a spring Noll had the thief in his grasp. Od's blood, the man was greased! Fast and furious the battle waged, but try as he might, Noll could get no firm hold on that

## In Point of Honor.

eel-like body. Then he gave up in disgust, and with a derisive laugh the native disappeared through the hole he had made. Sleep came then, and shortly the morning.

With the morning came a message from old England. His mother was dangerously ill and had sent for him. Procuring a year's leave of absence, he set sail. At what a snail's pace the boat had traveled! And then he landed in England, and stepped from the boat just in time to save the life of the queen and her lady. Hardly taking time to see the queen to the palace, he had hurriedly rushed to his home. Too late! His mother's spirit had winged its way to the bar of that High Tribunal. But there was his boy. It seemed—somehow it seemed—that his very life centered in that boy now—and his old father. How vivid memory has stamped the picture upon his brain; how true come back the impulses of those moments.

And then his wife had come—she who had left him two years agone, and who had been the price of his sacrifice to save the honor of the House of Hanover. Ah, the bitter, scathing words she had used! And then; the night he had sat in solitary vigil over his own dead——Great God, even a recapitulation of the scene almost drives him mad! Great Being, in Your infinite power, blot the page from Memory's book.

Then came his incarceration in the tower. How he longed, and watched, and listened for the approach of a friend. Would none ever come! Had even his old father deserted——Wait! What was that? A key turns in his cell door. A man ap-

## In Point of Honor.

proaches him in the gloom, shoves him forward, and says, "Fly!" Yonder in the semi-light stands his father. They flee toward Scotland:

"——like arrow fleet  
His heart flies singing to Hope's harvest land;  
But lo! the golden blades in promise sweet,  
Stiffen into Rue for Memory's hand."

The scene changes. He is now on the ocean, chained between the decks of a ship. Ah, the bitter, black thoughts he had garnered in the salutary of his soul on that voyage! Death would have been far preferable to the torture he had suffered in mind and body. His soul was like a ship, tempest-tossed, with neither helm nor chart; lashed about between the billowing clouds of hope and the frowning, awful breakers of darkest despair.

He could see how the convict, in his narrow cell, could resign himself to that just doom, as he lifted his red eyes through the place that admitted the narrow thread of light, and gazed far-off into the deepening blue. The convict's life was fixed, his days were numbered. With him (Noll) the end was not yet, his life was to be that of a slave. Through the hatch his hopeless gaze had fixed upon one tiny star. And then his heart had almost burst in its intense desire to creep there among that myriad of worlds. Why not? How calm, how peaceful, how sweet seemed the sleep of death. Only a short, fitful struggle, and the end. Was the soul immortal? Ah, that was the question that had caused many to pause upon the brink. But what of the man who had lost all object in life; who was neither superior to self nor to circumstance; who, like him-

## In Point of Honor.

self, was drifting without aim? Then he thought of his mother and her mother's prayers—— Yes, God was good. In His wisdom He had allowed, in His circling care, a place from the towering oak to the tiniest flower.

The scene changes again. He has reached this tragic new land with its heterogenous population. There is a vigor in the air which affects him; all unconscious he takes an interest in things. Then he stands before Colonel Fairfax, and the Colonel invites him to tell his story. He does so, and this grand, good man is deeply moved and advises him to lay aside the past and begin life anew in this new world; make this home and country and help fight the battles. His reception is all so different from what he had expected—he must have time to think. Time passes, and he does nothing but think—retrospective, not prospective. Next; the day he wanders down by the river and his brooding is interrupted by the voice of Ilma; and for a brief moment they had looked into each others' souls. He went over again his fight with Waunatoncah, and had heard the Indian's story. To-night he had battered down the door with a stool.

A gentle patter of rain against the window pane broke Noll's reverie and claimed his attention. He went over and gazed out into the darkness for a time. Then, crossing the room, he lifted the sheet and stood looking down on the face of the dead. Presently he became aware of another presence, and looking up, he saw Ilma in the doorway, her eye resting upon him. Softly she came and, unconscious-

### In Point of Honor.

ly, laying her hand upon his that was holding the sheet, she bent over and kissed the pale lips. Then they stood together for awhile, looking down on the calm dead face. Somewhere in the great blue hush of eternity was Robert's soul; and somewhere in the black darkness and rain of the night was a man, fleeing. Blacker than the night that envelops him he sees, immutable, his life page written in gore—every shadow a spectre, every sigh of the wind a groan. But the touch of a small white hand had stilled Noll's troubled spirit, and in his heart had crept a strange sweet peace.

Passion, thou art a mystery; Love, thou art but Passion's soft dalliance with human souls.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PURSUIT.

HIS was in the year 1774. The Colonies were upon the verge of war. There were many hearts that could only see overwhelming disaster in the momentus question in which the country was engaged; yet there were others, patriotic, out-spoken men, going about the land stirring up the people. Among them were John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Patrick Henry. Just now the country was laboring under the excitement occasioned by the act of Parliament annuling the venerated charter of Massachussettes; the people were declared rebels, and the entire country was aroused to a deep sense of indignation. One felt the poverty of the English language when trying to express the "impolicy, inhumanity, and cruelty of the acts of Parliament." Colonel Fairfax was now one of the most hot-headed, and it was for the purpose of attending an indignation meeting of the House of Burgesses that he was away from home at the time of Robert's death.

For a time the old gentleman stood as if stricken, after Kenton told him of the murder. Just one year ago he had buried another beloved boy, and now the second, and the last. The family name in his branch would pass away now at his death, and he had so fondly hoped it would not. Robert was to have been his staff in declining years, but the hope was

## In Point of Honor.

dead now. He must totter to the brink alone. For the past year his life had been like a chess-board; the hand of Fate moved Hope, then checkmated it with Despair. Kenton gently laid his hand on the old man's arm:

"Sir," he said, "your son was called upon to pay the last tribute to Nature. The Great Spirit that watches over the birds and beasts of the forest, as well as rules the hearts of men, saw fit to take him. He was a noble boy and perhaps he has gone to a nobler purpose. Whether we be from the northland or the southland; whether we are from the mountain or the vale, the city or the farm; whether we be Puritan, or Catholic, or Protestant; whether we be in the valley or on the hill-top of life, there will some day come a time when we must all answer to the last call of Nature and Nature's God; and there should not be among those who are left behind one who would gainsay it. Where will be the leaves of yonder forest two months from now? They will have fallen one by one. And so, each of us, in his turn, must take up the departure to the land of the spirits. The Great Spirit gave us this life and, of a right, can take it away. An oak once stood where you see yonder maple."

Kenton's words had effect on the Colonel, for he moved forward, and presently began making preparation for a rapid journey homeward.

"You say he escaped by the river?" the Colonel asked, breaking a long silence.

"Yes, sir, shoved off in Miss Ilma's boat."

"You saw nothing of him as you came down, I suppose—nothing of the boat?"

## In Point of Honor.

"Nothing at all, although I kept a close watch on both sides."

"Could it have been possible for him to have outdistanced you to Richmond?"

"I hardly think so, although he had two hours the start of me. It is my opinion that he took to the land some ten or twenty miles down the river. He will hardly show himself in so short a period, and so near the scene of his crime."

A fresh crew was enlisted and soon the measured strokes of their oars could be heard far up and down the James, as the men rowed Colonel Fairfax and John Kenton rapidly toward home. Instructions were given the slaves who had rowed Kenton down to follow on by land. The two men sat back in the stern of the cutter for some time in silence, the Colonel finally breaking the thread of thought so far, as to ask:

"Are you with us on the hunt, John—and revenge?"

"Sir, I looked on Robert Fairfax as I would upon a younger brother," was John's answer. It seemed to satisfy Colonel Fairfax.

Just at sundown the boat was beached at the landing. The gloom of death hung over the old house as they approached it. But why try and picture in feeble words the anguish of a mother's soul over the lifeless body of her boy, a father's grief and a sister's aching heart? It is something that cannot be told. It must be felt, it must be endured to be understood; and no historian, or novelist, or painter, has the power to portray the feeling.

As was to be expected, the Colonel was for con-

## In Point of Honor.

ducting the funeral services as early as possible the next morning in order that no more time might be lost in running down the fugitive. When they found him—God have mercy on his soul. Of course, the Colonel would go and would be the one to strike the first blow. To this Kenton objected, however, not that he did not want Colonel Fairfax to have revenge, but because it would take swift, agil men for this undertaking; younger men than the Colonel, and possessed of more vigor. He reasoned, and rightly, that Sussex had been long enough in this country to become familiar with its customs, therefore he would lose no time in making good his escape. Two men, he thought, could accomplish more than a dozen, that would be in each others way, and consequently make slow the progress of the chase. He would not hear of Colonel Fairfax undertaking such a pursuit, as there was no telling to where it might lead. He had known a man, Simon Girty, by name, after having committed acts violating the law, to flee beyond the mountains and take up his abode with the Indians.

"Mr. Noll, here, I think will be perfectly willing to go with me," Kenton suggested as they went out into the hall.

"I shall consider it an esteemed favor if Colonel Fairfax will but permit me," Noll eagerly exclaimed. "And I shall do all within my power to bring about his wishes in the matter."

All had stopped and were facing toward the center as Noll said this, and Colonel Fairfax was in the act of objecting to being left out, when their attention was attracted by the shuffle of feet on the front

## In Point of Honor.

porch. Looking in that direction, they saw Waunatoncah, grim and tall, standing in the doorway. There was an air of deep respect in his bearing, as the Indian walked forward and extended his hand to the Colonel.

"Great Hatchet killed a deer in the forest to-day and took it to the wigwam of my brother, there," meaning Kenton. "While there I was told of how a dog had killed your son, and I have come to tell you that the earth is not so broad, the waters are not so deep but what I will follow the dog and find him, for I am your friend."

Kenton instantly saw that here would be a valuable addition to the party, for he knew that an Indian would not give up a chase until all hope was lost. Recalling Waunatoncah's story, he repeated it to Colonel Fairfax, who stood listening with a deepening conviction of the Indian's wrong coming over him. When the story was finished, he stepped up, and grasping the native's hand, he said:

"Waunatoncah, you have more cause for revenge, perhaps, than I." Then turning to Noll, he continued: "Noll, I place this expedition in the charge of you and Kenton. Do what you think best."

The next morning at day-break the trio started on their search. In the discussion, just before the departure, it was revealed that Waunatoncah had discovered the deserted camp of a wandering band of Wyandots some twenty miles down the river the previous day, and in all probability Sussex had solicited their aid, and the Indians, ever ready to help the fugitive from justice, had consented. Perhaps by this time they were far on the route of escape.

## In Point of Honor.

Great Hatchet took the left bank of the river, while Noll, after ferrying Kenton across, was to keep pace with them in the canoe. While it was almost certain that Sussex had kept to the river, at least until he reached the Wyandot camp, yet it might have been possible that he took to land sooner than was expected. It was therefore necessary that they go slow in order to search closely for any trail he might leave, and it was noon before Kenton came to the deserted Indian camp, spoken of, and a halt was called. Waunatoncah was placed across and a thorough search was instituted for any sign a white man might leave. None was found, however, until the Indian resumed his seat in the canoe to be rowed across the river again. His quick eye caught sight of the print of a boot heel, just in the edge of the water and almost obscured by the prow of the canoe. Instantly there was suppressed excitement among the white men; the Indian appeared as if nothing had happened. No womanish excitement or childish impatience could disturb the dignity or chitanous impassiveness of his face.

"Evidently he has been here," said Kenton, "but where has he gone?"

"A proper question," rejoined Noll. "There is but the one mark, and that in the edge of the water. It seems——"

"My brothers wonder why the tracks lead no further," interrupted the Indian, "I will show them."

With a quick motion he drew the light boat from the water, and then concealed it in some rushes. Returning to his companions, he stood for a moment intently examining the tracks made by the Indians

## In Point of Honor.

around where the boat had landed, and then taking up one he followed it for a short distance out into the woods until he came to a tree that had recently fallen. To the immense surprise of Noll he drew Ilma's boat from the bushy top.

"'Twas done with Indian cunning," said Kenton, chuckling silently, yet with vast satisfaction. "No other race under the sun could have detected a difference in those tracks."

Noll was yet incredulous.

"You think then that Sussex is with those Indians?" he asked.

"Certain of it! Certain of it!" Kenton answered.

"Why is it then that we see only the one track?"

It was easy enough explained. The rain, which had fallen the night before, had caused the river to rise and the other boot tracks had been covered. An Indian had noticed the tracks at this point, and his cunning had suggested the change to moccasins. After this explanation Noll asked no more questions and implicitly followed directions.

Eating a hasty lunch, the three started upon the trail. It was soon seen that the Wyandots anticipated pursuit, for they took every precaution to obliterate their tracks. They might have succeeded had the white men been alone, although Kenton was skilled in woodcraft and the customs of the Indians, but it was impossible to conceal the faint, unerring signs from the keen eye of Waunatoncah. He pushed forward upon that trail like a wolf, with unerring scent, tracks the wounded deer. After several miles, though, the signs became much plainer; so much so, that even Noll could distinguish them.

## In Point of Honor.

"What think you, Great Hatchet, I make seventeen," said the hunter.

"My brother sees right; there are seventeen, counting the pale face."

When the night settled over the great wilderness they had traveled fifty miles; and that in the face of the fact that they had had to slacken their pace several times in coming down the river, in order to look closely for any trail Sussex might have left. It was useless to go on farther when, with all Wau-natoncah's skill, they could not have prevented themselves becoming lost from the trail, so a halt was called for the night.

At the first faint touch of morn the Indian was astir, and soon the three were on the march again. For hours they kept swiftly, steadily forward, the red skin always in the lead. Aided by such marks as only the sagacity of an Indian could trace, he held his way straight ahead, through fertile vales, across branches and riverlets, and over rolling hills with an accuracy that was almost like instinct. He never seemed to tire, but with head bent immovably forward, and his eyes fastened on the grass and dead leaves over which they trod, he glided swiftly onward, a solitary eagle's feather floating out behind from his crest. Whether the trail was hardly distinguishable, or disappeared altogether from the eye of the white men, seemed to make no perceptible difference to him. Only once did he stop, and that was caused by the bounding forward of a startled fawn, which circled and crossed the path. The lightning flash is not more quick than the flame that leaped from Kenton's rifle. One terrific bound,

## In Point of Honor.

and the fawn fell lifeless. " 'Twas the act of a boy," remonstrated the Indian. "Would my brother prepare a feast for those dogs, the Wyandots, to eat?"

"Waunatoncah has great wisdom, I acknowledge the rebuke," admitted Kenton. "But the instinct of the hunter is strong, and I believe I would have fired that shot though every red demon in the forest was lurking within the sound. My, but that was a pretty shot!"

"My brother is yet young; he must go drink from the fountain of wisdom visited by his father. But Waunatoncah is with him, and 'tis enough. Although the Wyandots number more than the fingers on my hands, yet they shall be driven like deer from the bushes. Their women shall weep and their wailings shall mingle with the wailings of children whose fathers shall not return. My brothers, let us cut from the legs of the red deer that we may have meat tomorrow."

Suiting the action to the words, he passed swiftly to the back of the fawn and drove his knife to its heart. Then with the skill of an expert he passed the knife from the flank to the backbone, and in another instant he had completely severed the two hind quarters. Next he unjointed the lower limbs and passed a prisoner's string through each hock. He was in the act of slinging the venison across his shoulders, when he stopped as if turned to stone.

"Hugh!" he exclaimed, quickly facing forward, like a hound that had scented the stag. The hunter instantly assumed the same stone-like posture, each bent forward in a listening attitude.

## In Point of Honor.

"What hear you, Waunatoncah? To my ears no strange sound approaches."

"I hear the sound of feet;" and the Indian bent forward until his head was within a foot of the ground.

"Great God, the red devils heard the crack of my rifle——Noll, behind yonder log, and do not even show the whites of your eyes until I tell you!"

"No," said the chief, "it is not red men, but pale faces."

"How many?"

The savage listened for another moment before replying.

"One," he answered, "and he is coming this way."

"Od's blood!" exclaimed Noll, "most wonderful!"

"I had thought that there was no man living who could hear and understand the sounds of the forest better than I," Kenton rejoined.

By this time the cracking of sticks could be plainly heard, and presently a man came into view, making long, powerful strides. He approached our friends like a man sure of a friendly welcome.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A CLEARING IN THE WILDERNESS.

**N**ET us pause for a moment to examine the man who has just approached our friends. He was dressed very much like Kenton; wearing a smock-frock picturesque hunting shirt, with the colors of the forest: his cap was of the skin of a beaver, while his legs were encased in a pair of buck-skin leggins, which laced up the side with a wide thong of the sinews of the deer, fringed from where they were tied. On his feet he wore a pair of moccasins, gayly ornamented after the manner of the Indians. That part of his body which was exposed showed muscles that laid about in cords, while his keen, black eye was constantly roving about as if expecting the approach of an enemy. His face, from what part could be seen from the soot and sunburn, denoted honesty and steadfast purpose—a pioneer. A knife handle was visible in his girdle of wampun, and a horn and coon-skin pouch hung under his right arm, while resting in his arm-pit was a rifle of great length.

"I heard the crack of your rifle," he said, "and knew by the sound that it was a white man's. I thought, maybe, it might be some of my friends."

"Are there white men out here among the beasts and dangers of this wilderness?" asked Noll, in unfeigned surprise.

"Even so," answered the stranger. "We came out here to escape the tyranny of England, and the

## In Point of Honor.

tax collector, only to meet death and destruction at the hands of the savages."

"Whither bound, my friend, and how is it that you are in such a plight?" asked Kenton.

"Follow me, and I will show you," he answered, and turned and rapidly led the way along the trail.

Soon they came to a little clearing and the sight that met their eyes was harrowing. The little cabin in the center was a mass of smoking ruins, and several charred bones could be seen lying about in the ashes. After silently looking at this scene for some time, the stranger beckoned the others to follow, and leading the way along a well beaten path, they soon arrived in front of another cabin in the outskirts of the woods, and on the bank of a spring branch. On arriving, the stranger told his story:

"About four years ago the old man and the old lady whose bones you saw yonder in those ashes, came out here and commenced the clearing up of this spot. The man had not been doing so well, and the taxes were galling, so he decided on moving farther west. I tried to dissuade him, but he was stubborn. He had a young daughter whom he had promised me for a wife when she became of age, so when they left, I followed. I helped to build his cabin, clear enough land to plant some late corn, and then I put up this cabin for myself. By this time winter came on and I spent it very profitably hunting and trapping—the old man assisting me occasionally. It lacked only two months until I could claim my bride. Yesterday morning I was sitting in the door here, smoking and watching my sweetheart as she went to yonder spring for some water. I was thinking of

## In Point of Honor.

the happiness that should soon be mine, and for which I had so long waited. Suddenly, as I sat there watching her, there arose on the air such a tumult of unearthly yells and shrieks as almost made the blood curdle in my veins. It seemed for a moment that the demons of hell had possessed themselves of these woods and found a savage humor in exercising their lungs. I knew what those sounds meant, but the shock paralyzed me for a moment, and I sat there unable to move. Then I saw a dozen hellishly painted demons rush from the forest to where that cabin stood, yonder, and sink their tomahawks to the brain of two helpless, old people. The sight sent the stagnant blood back into the fountains of my heart, and I sprang for my rifle. Too late! Looking through yonder window I saw that my sweetheart was being bound, and that the other cabin was being set on fire. The instinct of life is strong in every heart, if it be not unnatural, and I realized that it would be rushing to certain death to attempt succor just then, so I began looking about for some way of escape. The front door was blocked off, and, on slipping to the opening in the shed, I saw a white man and an Indian standing under that tree—the oak just inside the clearing. No other way presenting itself, I crawled up the chimney. I had barely drawn my feet up when an Indian entered the house. I thought several times that my time had come, as I heard them talking and shuffling around close to the fire-place. As you can see, they ransacked everything in the house and it is a thousand wonders they did not set fire to it. Their hellish work over, they left, and in a few min-

## In Point of Honor.

utes I descended and hurriedly followed after them. I remember of having some wild hope of being in some way able to rescue my sweetheart as I rushed along. Fortunately, though, action brought back my scattered senses, so I soon commenced following more cautiously. Last night I lay watching their camp fire all night long in the hope that the guard would go to sleep. But contrary to my earnest desire, as fast as one would lie down another would take his place. Long before morning came I felt the uselessness of attempting a rescue all alone, so was returning for help when I heard the report of your gun."

A silence of a minute followed the stranger's story. The white men exchanged glances of horror, but the Indian's face remained calm. After sufficient pause, he lifted his voice:

"The dogs, the Wyandots, fight only old men and women. When a warrior appears on the warpath they hide in the bushes like cowards."

"Friend," said Kenton, "you should thank heaven that the hairs on your head are still fixed where nature rooted them, and are not dangling from the belt of one of those Imps of Satan. We are with you, my friend, and you can rest easy that everything that a cool head, a strong arm, and a quick eye can do, will be done. We've got a grudge against those Indians and are hot after that white man, and if mortal eye can follow their trail we'll follow them to the ends of the earth or else find your lady."

"Good!" said the Indian. "Not so broad the earth is, not so deep its waters, but what the Great Hatchet will follow them, and hurl himself in their

## In Point of Honor.

midst, and strike; and their children shall cry for meat and never see the graves of their fathers."

A slight motion from Kenton's hand, and the Indian turned, and then the four went swinging through the forest. Silently, noiselessly they trod, grim determination depicted upon every face; traveling in single file, Waunatoncah leading and Noll in the rear. As they traveled Noll could see the dark form of the savage glancing in and out among the trunks of the trees, the eagle feather fluttering out behind in a current of air made solely by the swiftness of motion—a banner, it seemed to Noll, the which the others were to follow.

Just at sundown they came to where the Wyandots had camped the night previously, and as some of the coals of the camp fire were yet alive, they soon had a blaze, and a meal of broiled venison was partaken. As the sombre shades of night settled over the wilderness, Great Hatchet wrapped himself in his blanket, and stretching out full length with his feet to the fire, he was soon fast asleep. The white men however, were not just ready to lie down yet, so they took up positions just out from the circle of light, each apparently communing with himself. Kenton lay stretched out with his back to a log, his eyes following the rings of tobacco smoke as they curled up from his carved stone pipe. Noll seated himself, a short distance away, in the same position, fixing his gaze upon the heavens as reflected through the tree-tops; and the stranger was only a short distance from Noll, both elbows resting on his knees and his chin in his hands. Noll was the first to break the silence which had perhaps held

## In Point of Honor.

them for half an hour; his words, though, were more of a soliloquy than an address:

"Man must commune with nature in the solitude of the forest to have a proper appreciation of the Infinite," he said. "Particularly in this period when there are such transformations of ideals and creeds, if a man would have the spirit of reverence enter his soul; if he would feel that fine reverence which is directly active over the whole mental and moral being—a true worship—he must plunge deep within the silence of the woods, away from the haunts of man."

Kenton smoked on, seemingly paying no attention to his companion. After a few moments, Noll continued; he spoke this time just as though answering a question he had asked himself.

"No—, in the habitudes of men every formulated fantasy of the brain is in vogue. There seems to be no stable and true religion; yet religion is the unit in man's life. From the cradle to the grave it wraps him in its vast folds. Back through the long, long cycles of the world there has been no record made of where it has been obliterated from his nature." (Another pause.) "No—, books have not made it so, for man made the books. Destroy all the influence of all the creeds; blot out of existence all the books pertaining to them, and man would yet be religious, for he is inherently so. Place him in the heart of a primal forest and he is doubly so, for look where he may, he sees the perfect order of creation, and must pause in that awe, akin to reverence, of the Infinite power that gives it its being."

Kenton was at last aroused. Noll's words had

## In Point of Honor.

touched a chord in his nature. Taking his pipe from his mouth he turned to Noll and spoke:

"I am not much tutored in the ways of the scholar," he began, "but I think I get the jist of what you are talking about. I can count upon the fingers of my hands the times I have entered the meeting house at home, but I think I have feelings at times to which the most devout of the 'Lord's anointed' are strangers. I have traveled from the land of the snow and shadows, Mr. Noll, to the land of the sunshine and flowers; I have traced the signs of the forest from the salt sea water to the soft sweet water of the big river that flows toward the summer. No books were mine in those wanderings; but I read a language in the stars. The murmur of the brook was sweetest music to me. Often have I paused to watch the soaring of an eagle in the heavens, and thrilled at the note of a mocking-bird, until my heart almost burst with its spirit of rapture and reverence."

Both men lapsed into silence again, mastered by the spirit of their own emotions. Darkness closed in and the inhabitants of the night took up their rambles. An owl, attracted by the fire light, fluttered close over head. A rabbit hopped just inside the shadows, blinked his eyes, and then scampered away. The minds of both Noll and Kenton were dwelling upon those temples built in the fancies of men, to whom life seemeth good, and which the soul so eagerly devours—knowing that they rapidly pass. As they sat there, a cry half-human, half-animal, arose on the air, not only penetrating the recesses of the forest, but the hearts that heard it. It was

## In Point of Honor.

followed by a stillness, seemingly as deep, as if the progress of the worlds had halted at such a blood-curdling interruption.

"My God!" exclaimed Noll, "was not that the scream of a woman in mortal agony?"

Kenton, who in truth had felt the shock of the scream, though often having heard such before, now sat silently chuckling at Noll's apparent discomfiture.

"The panthers are out early to-night," he said. "Perhaps they have caught the scent of our venison and——"

He paused, for the hoot of an owl in an opposite direction caught his ear. Waunatoncah lifted himself upon his elbow, his hand going behind his ear as though to assist his hearing, while his quick and rapid glances ran constantly over every object within the range of his vision. Just then the cry of a loon, badly uttered, came from another quarter. The Indian sank down as if lifeless, and even while Noll was watching him he commenced worming himself from out the circle of light.

"Follow me!" the voice of the stranger whispered in Noll's ear.

"Why all this mystery?" he thought, as he silently followed the stranger deeper into the darkness. He had hardly framed the thought before his ears were pierced by such a tumult of yells and cries as he had never heard before. Turning his head, he saw a dozen dusky forms leap within the light of the fire.

## CHAPTER IX.

BAFFLED BY A PAIR OF BOOTS.

**R**USHING hither and thither, yelling all the while, the Indians were more like phantoms of death than human beings. Finally they all gathered around the fire as though to hold a council of war. When they were all seated and the pipe had passed around, one arose, and by his jestures, our friends knew he was addressing the crowd. When he had finished his short talk, they all jumped to their feet, and another yell rent the air, but it was different from the others, and had more the sound of disappointment. Turning, they all left the scene, striking to the southward.

"The Seminoles are a nation of lazy women and know not the sounds of the forest," said the chief.

"They are a set of fools if they think we know not the call of a loon from the voice of a squaking jay," rejoined Kenton.

"Are they not the Indians for whom we are looking?" asked Noll.

"No, they are only a party of marauding reptiles returning from the hunt, or hanging upon the outskirts of the settlements, where they occasionally slay and scalp some venturing spirit that goes too far into the woods. They saw our camp fire, and thinking it probably some hunter, decided to scalp him and then go home and boast of the valiant deeds

## In Point of Honor.

they did against the white man and on the war path. Your skulking Indian is an inveterate boaster," answered Kenton.

The soft gutteral tones of the Sachem were next heard:

"The Seminoles are a nation of singing birds," he said. "They try to slip upon the sleeping panther, but the panther is swift and strong and leaps from them."

After delivering himself of this broad metaphore, the Indian deliberately wrapped his blanket about him again and stretched himself under a spreading tree. Kenton and the stranger did likewise, and Noll was left to no other recourse. Only a few faint orbs were twinkling in the heaven the next morning when they resumed their journey.

"At this rate we will catch them some time today, won't we?" the stranger asked when they were well under way.

Waunatoncah stopped, made a broad sweep of his hand from east to west, then resumed his pace. The squatter knew the gesture to mean they would come up with them at sun down. They had not gone much farther, however, when an exclamation from Noll caused another halt. Going back to where he was they saw him stooping over a place where the stranger's moccasin had brushed the leaves away.

"Ah, the murdering devil has again put on his boots, has he!" exclaimed Kenton. "His tender feet were too delicate to stand the roughness of travel in moccasins. Before the sinking of tomorrow's sun those boots will drag his soul to perdition, or

## In Point of Honor.

I'm no prophet, and my hand has lost its cunning'"

Waunatoncah looked approvingly at Noll: "Good!" he said, "my brother has good eyes; will be a great chief in his nation some day."

"How can I help becoming a close observer when I have the pride of the Massawomekes as a leader," Noll answered, fixing an approving eye also upon the red skin.

They had perhaps traveled a mile farther when it was discovered that the trail divided; eight of the pursued party keeping directly westward, while the others turned to the north. A consultation was had and then a thorough examination of the tracks. It was evident, by the boot marks, that Sussex was with the north bound party; and a closer search revealed the foot prints of the girl also.

"I knew it! I knew he would do it!" Kenton exclaimed. "The hound has turned north and hopes to join the English army, where he thinks he will be safe. 'Twas but in reason."

"'Tis fortunate that both those we seek are in the same party," said the stranger.

"Uncommon lucky I call it," returned Kenton. "I guess that Englishman has set his eyes on your girl, friend, or else those Indians would have taken her to the wigwams of their nation."

At sun down they came to the bank of a lake, and on the opposite side, no more than a mile across, they could see the gleam of a camp fire. For some time they all stood looking out across the water at the distant light, speculating as to the nearest route around to the other shore. As it would never do to wait until the next morning, the Indian had turned to

## In Point of Honor.

take up the long tramp around the lake when the stranger halted him.

"Wait a minute," he said. "This is certainly the lake I trapped on two winters ago. I can tell by yonder dead cypress that used to be my guide when I would come in late at night. If I am not the worst fooled man in the world, there is hid about here, somewhere close, a birch bark canoe. It seems to me that it is farther to the east of us."

Sure enough, after hunting around for some time, the stranger pulled from its hiding place, an Indian canoe. It was damp and mouldy, but answered the purpose, and soon the little party had paddled across the lake. They landed about a mile below the other party, and then made a stealthy march to their place of encampment. A few minutes spent in reconnoissance, enabled them to locate each member of the pursued, including the girl—and the pair of boots.

The sight of his sweetheart drove the hot blood like lava to the brain of the stranger, and he insisted on striking the marauders at once. Waunatoncah, too, felt the presence of his mortal enemy, as could be told by the tightening of the muscles around the mouth, and the nervous clutching of his tomahawk. But he and Kenton had seen terrific encounters before and knew that this was not the hour to strike.

"We want to get the last screeching imp of 'em," explained Kenton, "or else they will double on our track and give us trouble. The hour of daybreak is the time and not 'til then. We might drop four of them now, but the others would bound into the forest and get away; and as its an Indian's nature to spill blood for blood, if he doesn't get circumvented,

## In Point of Honor.

we'd be the hunted ones as well as the hunters."

As there was every sense of reason in his statement, Kenton's companions had no other choice but to obey. Then they took up the long, weary watch of the night, made all the more lengthy by their watching. Noll sat, alternately tingling with excitement and nodding with drowsiness. All sorts of fantasies chased each other through his brain. Now he was back in boyhood hours—that sweet period of our day dreams. Then the flicker of the flames of the Wyandot's camp fire would remind him of the times he had often watched the desert fires, around which the Mussulmen, bearded and dark visaged, would sit and smoke. And then his restless thought would go climbing the star-sloped stairs of space, and he would wonder and yearn to know what was behind the curtain of the vast blue.

Your red skin is an early riser when on the march, and as soon as the sun began to shed a soft light in the east, four of the Wyandots were astir to prepare the morning meal. A council of war was held by our friends, and it was agreed that they should spread out so as to guard every avenue of escape. Noll and the stranger were in the center, and the Sachem and Kenton took up their positions near the lake with the camp between them. Kenton had directed each of his companions to take sure aim, and pointed out the man each was to shoot. It was agreed that **Sussex** was to be left to the mercy of Waunatoncah, whatever that might be. The cry of a jay was to be the signal to fire, and all were to reload as rapidly as possible without exposing their strength to the enemy.

## In Point of Honor.

They fired almost simultaneously, and each made a successful shot. The remaining five Wyandots leaped to their feet and made a dash for the woods in the direction of Kenton, where they were soon hid. Waunatoncah bounded from his hiding place, and rushing forward, prostrated himself behind one of the canoes that the Wyandots had dragged from the water. An anxious moment then followed. Noll, the stranger, and Great Hatchet were each trying to locate a man, when the crack of Kenton's rifle again echoed through the forest. An Indian uttered a piercing yell, jumped into the air and fell headlong. But the sound of the rifle had directed the others to at least one of their adversaries, so with the spring of panthers, the other four darted toward Kenton with up-lifted tomahawks and blood-curdling yells. Three more shots rang out and another Wyandot was brought to the ground, mortally wounded.

Kenton saw the danger he was in, so springing to his feet, he bounded off like a deer, with the remaining three swift after him. The squatter rushed to the release of his sweetheart; Noll stood irresolute; but Great Hatchet, uttering the fierce yell of the Massawomekes, sprang forward to the assistance of his friend. The chase was a terrific one, every power of the participants being brought into play. Kenton, who had practiced the art of reloading his rifle while on a dead run, suddenly wheeled and shot the nearest of his pursuers through the head. The others halted in surprise, for they had no other thought but what his rifle was unloaded. Their momentary pause gave Great Hatchet time to come

## In Point of Honor.

up and he closed headlong with one of the remaining. Each avoiding the quickly hurled hatchets, the men of the wilderness grappled as if by common consent.

The other savage seeing his companion engaged, uttered a fiendish yell and rushed toward the now practically unarmed white man. Again Kenton dashed off at the top of his speed, the Indian close behind him. He darted from one side to the other to avoid the fatal throw of the uplifted tomahawk, and so great were his exertions that he could find no time to reload as he ran. After running perhaps a hundred yards, intuition told Kenton that his enemy was getting ready to hurl the hatchet. He dropped upon one knee just in time, for the handle of the murderous implement of death brushed his hair as it passed. Hastily turning his body, Kenton braced himself for the coming shock, at the same time thrusting forward the muzzle of his long rifle. So great was the headlong velocity of the Indian that he had no power to check himself, and doubled all up with the muzzle of the rifle midway in his stomach. The force of such a contact was enough to have eventually caused the death of the red-skin, but to make doubly sure, Kenton crushed in the skull of his writhing foe with the heavy butte of his gun. Then he rushed back to where Waunatoncah had engaged the other Indian.

The swift passage of a strong wind could not have caused the leaves and leave-dust to be more tossed and troubled than did those fierce combatants. As Kenton came up Noll appeared on the other side. A combat upon such unequal footings

## In Point of Honor.

could not last long. Getting an opportunity, Kenton again effectually used the butte of his gun, bringing it down on the unprotected head of the Wyandot, whose tense muscles seemed to wither under the force of the awful blow as he fell back limp and lifeless. Great Hatchet leaped to his feet and made the forest fairly ring with the voice of the conqueror.

"Victory for the right! Death to the murderers!" shouted Kenton, swinging his rifle over his head. "No quarter to the accursed thief is my——"

He stopped as if stricken by the hand of Deity, his eyes riveted upon the feet of the fallen Indian. Noll and Great Hatchet followed the direction of his gaze and saw—a pair of English boots.

The battle was like the passage of a whirlwind, and so fierce and rapid had it been that our combatants had lost sight of the object of their pursuit. The sight of Sussex's boots on the feet of the fallen Indian forcibly reminded them of it, at the same time bringing upon them the startling truth that they had been baffled.

"'Twas like him, the murdering, lying, cheating, cowardly varmint!" muttered Kenton. "An honest and a brave man would never have loaded the spirit of a poor Indian down with a pair of boots just as he was about to make the journey to the Happy Hunting Grounds!"

For once the stoicism of Waunatoncah was shaken. So great was his chagrin that he walked back to where the stranger and his sweetheart were, even denying himself the custom of his race—that of scalping the slain. Noll and Kenton followed him

## In Point of Honor.

him back, and all sat in silence while the girl prepared the morning meal. There was no need to comment, and no excuse, but fate, presented itself for their failure. Bitter disappointment filled each heart—the lovers excepted—consequently a very scanty meal was partaken.

“ ‘Twas the hand of that Destiny that says, ‘Vengeance is mine,’ ” said Noll, as he slowly masticated a piece of broiled venison.

“ And they will be three days the start of us before we can strike their trail again,” mused Kenton, “ and a cold track means a slow chase. Even when we do strike it again, it is only a day’s journey to the mountains, and you might as well try to shut out the glare of a candle light by striking a piece of flint and steel together as to hunt for a skulking Indian in the recesses of those mountains.”

An Indian may be vulnerable to the feelings of disappointment, but he rarely shows it, and never abandons a pursuit, especially where the motives prompting that pursuit are deep-seated and based upon revenge. Great Hatchet now set about the retracing of his steps and again taking up the trail of Sussex, with a pertenacity that would have done credit to a blood hound. That night found the party camped where the main trail had divided, and the next morning at day-break the Indian was up and ready to resume the march.

“ Mist—er—Mist—by what name do you hail, stranger?”

“ Wilkins, sir, Silas Wilkins.”

“ Well, Mr. Wilkins, I suppose our paths separate here. You will take your lady toward the rising

## In Point of Honor.

sun, while we will sleep with him in yonder mountains. Know you where you will take up your abode, my friend?"

"I have not yet decided, but there is one thing of which I am certain—Betty and I have had enough of the wilderness."

"I suppose it is but natural for one of your ways to say that, but as for me"—Kenton mused awhile. "From my earliest recollections I have had an unrestrained love for the forest, and I guess that I will be sort-o-like that fellow, Moses, the preacher told us about the last time I was at meeting—my flesh will rot and my bones will bleach somewhere in the wilderness, and there will be no stone to mark my last resting place. But, as I was going to tell you, if you have no other place to go and will take the advice of one who knows, just follow this trail back until you strike the James. There, to the left of you, you will find two canoes hid in some rushes. Take one of them and paddle you and your lady up the river about twenty miles until you come to the plantation of Cecil Fairfax. Tell the old grey-headed, dignified man that John Kenton sent you and you will not only find welcome, but a home as well."

"Thank you, sir, not only for your advice, but for what you and your friends, here, have done for me."

"It was not anything but what other men, that had a spark of manhood in their carcasses, would have done. You can further tell Colonel Fairfax that you left us upon the trail, and that it led toward the mountains."

"Tell my snow-haired father that the Great Hatchet is upon their track; 'tis enough."

## CHAPTER X.

UNDER THE SHADOW OF A MOUNTAIN.

**N**Ight came; it found Noll, Kenton and Waunatoncah encamped under the shadow of a mountain. Reader, were you ever encamped under the shadow of a mountain? Then you have felt that you were close to the great throbbing heart of Nature. Have you ever listened to the music of the brooks as they swished and gurgled down the mountain side? Then you have heard the melody of majesty encompassed within Nature's bosom. Have you ever stood upon the mountain side and watched the stars come out one by one; and then paused in wrapt attention while the moon arose in her glory and spread a silvery mantle over the world? Did you ever climb to the mountain top and while there see the spirit of the storm cover the world below in darkness and gloom? Did you ever hear the grand organs of Nature, touched by the hands of Deity, peal forth in notes of thunder until the craigs echoed and re-echoed in awful volume? And did you ever see the lightning run its forked tongue along the mountain tops for a thousand miles, swift as the eye can flash? If so, then you have some faint, glimmering conception of the Power that holds in motion the worlds.

A little babbling brook ran just below where Kenton had pitched camp. Its limpid waters joined those of the James, which stretched away into the distance like a silver thread. The party had hastily

## In Point of Honor.

constructed a temporary shed to protect them from the chill and falling dew. This done, they threw themselves on the ground until each saw fit to sleep. They had not been in this position long, when Kenton, turning to Noll, asked:

"Noll, did you ever hear of how the Indians account for the presence of the stars?"

"No, tell me how it is."

"I'm not much on telling stories, and especially repeating Indian legends, but it runs something like this:"

### THE ORIGIN OF THE STARS.

In the beginning the Great Spirit made the world; made the forests to hunt in and the streams to fish in. Then He made the elk, the deer, and the bison, and all other animals, birds and fishes. Last He made the Indian and placed him ruler over all. But the Indian complained to the Great Spirit that he had no time to dress and cook his meat, so numerous was the game and so eager was he for the chase. The Great Spirit then called His four sons together, and they smoked the peace pipe and held a council. It was agreed at that meeting that they make woman.

They made her with the softness of the wild flower, the sweetness of the wild bee's honey, the jealousy of the panther, yet possessing the timidity of the fawn. She was light of weight and her strength lay in her tongue. Very beautiful they made her; so beautiful, in fact, that each of the four brothers fell in love with her and wanted her for his own squaw.

Then there arose a great tumult in the wigwam of the Great Spirit, and long and furious the four brothers battled for the possession of the woman. But the Great Spirit had made her for the Indian, whom He greatly loved, and while they fought He

## In Point of Honor.

placed her on earth. Great was the disappointment when the brothers found this out, but the Mighty shamed them for their wickedness, and then there was peace in the sky. But the brothers often looked down and saw the woman, and soon a mighty desire to possess her, again filled each of their hearts. Separately they sought the Father, and with beseechings, begged Him to place them on earth; each not knowing that the other had counseled with the Great Spirit.

Now the Great Spirit has a big ear, and loves His children. If a word starts to fall to the ground He is swift, and catches it. So when they asked, He decided to grant their wishes. The fiercest He made the North wind; the laziest He made the South wind; the handsomest He made the East wind to usher in the morn; while the somberest, most silent and melancholy He made the West wind to bring out the shades of night.

No sooner were the brothers on earth than they began to battle again for the woman. The South wind came and brought the flowers, but the East wind, becoming jealous, brought the sun and wilted them. Then the West wind came, and shedding the dew upon the petals, he revived them and stole their perfume and wafted it to the nostrils of the woman. But the North wind had been watching, and controlling his passion no longer, he shook his hoary ringlets and came from the land of the winter. For many years the battle waged, until the snow began to freeze in the hair of the man and the woman. Then the Great Spirit returned from a journey of many summers, and seeing the battle which His sons were waging, He became very angry. So He sent Death into the world to settle the dispute. Death caused a deep sleep to fall upon the Indian and His squaw, and the Mighty took their spirits to a better and happier hunting ground. Since then all good Indians build a fire just before entering the Happy

## In Point of Honor.

Hunting Ground, in order to light some friend or relative on the way, and each star represents the fire some departed Indian has kindled.

A low rumbling sound in the northwest interrupted a further conversation. Dark, ominous looking clouds were rapidly spreading along the mountain side, and upon seeing them each one fell to cutting more boughs in order to make the shelter more water-proof. Spreading one of the blankets they had secured from the slain Wyandots over it, they crawled under to await the action of the elements. The rain was sudden, short and fierce, and although lasting but a few minutes it was sufficient to thoroughly drench the ground.

"It's my opinion that this cloud struck the other side of yonder chain of mountains, and then traveled up it until it struck this chain, consequently swerving it to the southeast. If it did, only a nose, and that nose belonging to a blood-hound, can follow the trail in the morning," said Kenton,

In order to more thoroughly understand Kenton's meaning a topography of the country should be given. They had passed through one defile and had camped on the western side of a small mountain chain, which ran directly north and south for a few miles, then making a graceful curve to the northwest. Another chain, just in front of them, ran a little east of north, and almost butted into the curve. It was Kenton's opinion that the cloud had originally started from the southwest, following the latter chain up until it struck the curve, where it changed its course, coming from the northwest when first observed. This was directly on the course of the

## In Point of Honor.

trail, consequently causing Kenton some worry.

"A hound that could follow a trail three days old, and that after such a driving rain as we have just had, would be worth his weight in gold," observed Noll, to Kenton's remark.

"Quite right, my friend, quite right."

"Do you have any idea as to the extent of the country on the other side of these mountains?"

"The forest is as boundless as the waters of the sea. There is league on top of league through whose solemn depth a white man's foot has never trod; and whose echoes have never been awakened by the crack of a rifle. I was down at the Clinch River settlement last summer, and while there I met a fellow by the name of Boone—Daniel Boone, I believe. He has been over in that country and says that the bison and deer are so countless that they shake the earth when they run; and that they scarcely fear their natural enemy, man. He almost persuaded me to go with him out there on a hunt, and I do not know but what I will join the party he is getting up to settle in those regions next spring, if the old folks are willing, and we ever catch up with that scoundrel, Sussex."

"Then there are no settlements out there?"

"None of which I know, this side of the big river. All I know of the country is what I have heard from the Indians. They call it the 'Dark and bloody ground,' and it seems to be a favorite place where they meet and kill each other. I believe the Cherokee Nation claims it. There is a French settlement away across over there somewhere called Vincennes, but I do not know just where—somewhere,

## In Point of Honor.

though, on the other side of the big river."

Next morning the journey was resumed, although Kenton lacked the enthusiasm that had characterized his actions heretofore. They found that the rain had proceeded just as he had apprehended, and that it had completely washed out every semblance of a sign. After passing around the curve spoken of they all halted. Before them stretched the boundless forest, and no indication as to which direction their enemy had taken.

"I see no use in going farther," Kenton said. "In all probability those Indians will take Sussex to their village until winter is over—and only God in heaven knows where that village is. When spring comes they will then likely proceed to Detroit, where there is a British garrison. I think the best thing to do is to return and appeal to the crown."

"Appeal to the crown!" snorted Noll. "You might as well appeal to the devil in hell!—they are about on a par when it comes to meeting out justice!"

Kenton looked at him for some time as though expecting an explanation to such an outbreak, but getting none, he replied:

"Well, we can do nothing on such a blind trail, and I, for one, am ready to turn back. What do you think about it, Great Hatchet?"

The Indian, who had been a silent listener, though at no time a participant in the above conversation, gravely turned and faced his companions. He deliberately took from his belt of wampun a beautifully carved stone pipe, which he lighted in a solemn manner. After blowing the smoke to the four winds

## In Point of Honor.

of heaven, he passed the bowl to Kenton, who, knowing the customs of the Indians, puffed out a cloud of smoke, then handed the pipe to Noll. After these preliminaries, the Indian spoke as follows:

"My brother is right. Let him return to the wigwam of my grey-haired father. Let him go weep with my father over the grave of the son. Listen! The Indian is the child of the forest; the pale-face is a child of the wigwam. The big sea has its own solemn music; mountains here sing unto mountains yonder. The valleys ever have the music of the streams. The Indian hears it and loves it. Only the silence of winter breaks the songs of the birds of summer. Since water was sweet and the meat of the bison was good has the Indian known this, and my brothers know that their ears drink no lie. Now listen! A shadow stands in the wigwam of the Great Hatchet. His people are watching it, but they have not seen it move. There are dark spots on the hearts of Waunatoncah and my snow-haired father; they must be washed away with blood. The spirits of Onewah and Robert Fairfax are calling out that the briars are thick in the paths that lead to the blessed grounds of their people. They must be cleared away. Does the hunter stop when the trail of the trembling deer is lost in the mountains? You know that he does not. Now what am I? An Indian. The Great Spirit made me a child of the forest. An Indian never forgets. Look at me! You see my face. Now look at me! You see my back. That shows you that I am your friend, for that part of me an enemy has never yet seen. I have spoken. I now listen."

## In Point of Honor.

"Part of what you say is right, red-skin, and part is not. No man ever heard of John Kenton becoming a turn-coat. The winter's snow has no more terrors for him than it does for an Indian—although there is no denying the fact that a good log fire is rather comfortable at times. If I turn back it is because I know of a shorter trail, and not that I give up the chase. What you say, though, is according to your nature, and I will hold nothing against you. Neither will I try to persuade you from what you have set your heart by, although I think it will take all winter to find that trail again, and when you do, it will lead to Detroit."

Noll offered a word of persuasion to the Indian to return with them, but Kenton interrupted him:

"Friend, it is no use. The home of the red-skin is in the brooding forest—he would never consent. I know the nature of an Indian, and I know that what he does is from a matter of conscience. Great Hatchet has sworn to absent himself from his people until the stigma upon his name is wiped away in blood; and he will never give up, as long as he has a possible chance of finding Sussex." Then turning to the Indian, Kenton continued: "It is well. Great Hatchet is a mighty chief. He is a beaver in council and a leaping panther in battle. If he finds not his enemy in the forest, let him return with the flowers of spring and I will show him the trail."

"Good! I will return, but it will be with the scalp of Sussex, or upon his track."

Gathering up his blankets and rifle, Waunatoncah plunged alone into the forest. Noll and Kenton turned their faces toward home.

## CHAPTER XI.

### BITS FROM HISTORY.

HIS American people of the weird, wild wold, who were they? These people whose ancestors had been driven from their homes by the exactions of a tyrant, and the bigotry of ecclesiastical power? They had sought this new world and claimed it for their own. They had hewn out of the forest new homes and set up their institutions, baptising them in sorrow, well besprinkled with blood. The land was theirs by right of conquest, for they had won it from the savage. They owned it by right of possession, and they had made it what it was. If their was any equity in law; if their was any tolerance in religion, it was theirs, and neither nation nor man had the right of arbitrary government. Their ideals were new, broad-based on nature's truths and seeking after God, and no churlish potentate had the right to tear them down. Although a people in the raw, yet they possessed something that stands at par the world over and is legal tender in every trial and travail of life—simple innate manhood. It was their mission to show to the world that the lord is the laborer—the son of toil the true lord.

It was now in the early spring of 1775, and the whole country was in a seething turmoil. The question was whether the colonies should remain subject to the dictates of an arrogant, selfish tyrant, or, by taking up arms, oppose him and become a sovereign

## In Point of Honor.

people. The discussion had become all absorbing among the women—and was indeed ominous. No people were more ready to place the issue in the hands of war than those of Virginia. Her orators were thundering at every place of meeting. Of course Colonel Fairfax was drawn into the vortex.

When Noll and Kenton had returned he showed no great disappointment at their failure, although he would like to have known that the murderer of his son had been brought to justice. He would hear of no further attempt to pursue Sussex, however, and when Noll suggested that they appeal to the crown, he shook his head:

"It would be of no use," he had said. "The trial, if any, would be but a mockery—a farce. An American subject of the crown has no right under the law."

Then he had taken up the duties of his household for the winter. To Noll, he allowed the privilege of going when and where he pleased, at the same time offering him a place by his own fire-side with remunerative employment. The latter proposition Noll had accepted, and during the winter the two were much together. At first, Mrs. Fairfax held aloof, but finally under the influence of her husband, she was constrained to treat Noll with polite concern. Her address, always dignified and imposing, to him was courteous, though reserved.

When in the presence of Ilma there was a subtle power that touched Noll's inmost being, and made him seem silent and taciturn. She seemed somehow to carry the sunshine of the Creator in her pure transparent soul; and often as he would sit near

## In Point of Honor.

her, he would catch himself studying the sweet rare face, and comparing the silken tresses of her hair to soft moonbeams, suggesting—half formed thoughts that slip away. She saw, and understood, and in her heart she was not displeased. In their conversations, which were few, she studiously avoided reference to the past, knowing that time would unfold the story of his life, which her woman's curiosity was burning to hear from his own lips. She would have denied, even to herself, that her feelings for him were other than solicitude, although her woman's heart was always busy framing explanations of the terrible tragedy that had occurred in England. To-day (1775) she had found him in the library sombre and moody, and with ready tact she sought to relieve him of the torture she knew his brooding was bringing.

"Have hope," she said.

"Have hope!" he answered her. "Is there any hope for a man whose ambition is all but dead? Miss Ilma, every kindred tie in my life is severed. Father, mother, and baby are dead, and I'm an exile from my country. Perhaps if I but tell you the story of—" strange perversity of woman's nature—just as he was on the point of telling her what she would have given worlds to have known, she interrupted him:

"As long as there is life, Mr. Noll, there is hope for the brave man. Only the coward gives way to despair. A man's life is what he makes it. There is always a harvest ahead if a man would but reap it. Form new ties; create new ideals and aspirations. It is not so much in the fact that we have

## In Point of Honor.

reached the goal of our ambition that we find the pleasure, but in the contemplation of the roses we have gathered along the journey. Even bitter trials, in after years, become pleasant, though sad reminiscences."

The Colonel entered just here, and soon a warm argument ensued. Like all American gentry of that day, he was very fond of discussing public events, often allowing his enthusiasm to lead him into heated arguments. Rebellion was the cry of the land now, and the earnest desire of the Colonel's heart was to win Noll over to his way of thinking. He was much wrought up this morning over the action of a British officer in sending abroad for trial one of his friends under a petty charge. The Colonel immediately launched forth on the impolitic, despotic, and obstinate measures of Parliament and the King, Noll mildly protesting some of his statements.

"There will certainly be a peacable adjustment," was one of Noll's protests.

"Let me tell you, Noll, there is no longer any hope of a peacable adjustment! The people must resort to arms to retain even a vestige of lib— Od's blood! I mistake—we are serfs already!"

"It's a pity that the King is so obstinate," said Noll. "He should be firm, but not obstinate."

"Too late! sir, too late! And even if it were not too late, the King has not the judgment. Obstinacy, sir, and firmness are parallel lines, running in close proximity, and it is easy to mistake the one in the use of the other. Judgment, sir, good judgment, is the only safeguard against their misapplication,

## In Point of Honor.

and the King lacks this judgment." Here the Colonel abruptly changed the subject:

"Noll, we have had many discussions this past winter, and on the whole I'll admit that I have found them pleasant, although you have maintained an obstinacy equal to that of the King's in not accepting the course I think best for you. I now want to know what, in your opinion, should be the fundamental principles of government?"

Noll hesitated for some seconds. He knew of the Colonel's fondness for argument, and as the question was broad-based he took some time to study.

"Equity, tolerance and fraternity," he finally answered.

"Zounds, sir, you are right!" the Colonel exclaimed. "Equal rights to all subjects; tolerance in matters pertaining to creeds; brotherly love between the provinces—comperes, sir, in the great dominion of righteous government. That is all the American people want, and that is just what England is denying us. The time has come for us to assert our rights."

The summons to a meal here interrupted the discussion, but it was resumed at the table. As usual it ended by the Colonel insisting upon Noll relinquishing all rights of future citizenship in England and taking up the cause of America; and as usual Noll hesitated before answering. This always made the Colonel mad, and he ended the conversation with an angry toss of his head.

As has been before stated, when a Fairfax came to a decision he acted by it. The Colonel was now

## In Point of Honor.

for America, body and soul, ready to use his means and influence toward her independence. He had invited Patrick Henry and Colonel George Washington to spend a few days with him, which invitation they had accepted, and it was his intention to have them address the populace during their stay. In order to bring the people together he had widely advertised a "shooting match" which was to take place at the King's Inn, the next day. The guests were expected by dusk, and promptly at that hour they rode up on horseback.

"Well, Colonel Fairfax, how are you? Any rebels in this country?" were the first words of Henry, as he dismounted.

"Fairly well, sir, fairly well—not many rebels now, but we hope to have some soon—Ah, Colonel Washington, it has been some time since I had the pleasure of welcoming you to Fairfax Hall."

"Not since I returned with you from that memorable scene in the House of Burgesses, in which our friend, here, won his spurs as an orator and you cried treason," rejoined Colonel Washington, at the same time giving Henry a sly wink.

"Yes, yes, I remember that time," laughed the Colonel—"Tarquin and Caesar had each his Brutus, Charles I. his Cromwell, and George III.—'Treason!' I yelled, and sprang to my feet. But a man has the right to change his mind, has he not?"

A negroe servant had taken charge of the horses, and by this time they had approached the porch where Mrs. Fairfax and her daughter stood waiting. There was a spirit of welcome in the simple dignity with which the host and hostess received their

## In Point of Honor.

guests. There was a spirit of freedom, a sense of hospitality, an air of aristocracy about it.

Both Washington and Henry were well and favorably known to the ladies, and for some time they were kept busy telling Ilma of her distant friends, with whom they were acquainted.

"My mother," said Washington during the evening, "spoke of meeting you, Miss Ilma, two summers ago with a crowd of your girl friends at Richmond. She was very much impressed with you, and I would now like to thank you for your kindness to her."

"Did she remember me? I shall never forget her. She is so dignified and commanding—a remarkable woman. When I was in her presence I was awed into silence, not through fear, but because of the nobleness of character, which manifests itself in every word and action. She has a heart in which there is room enough to take in every one of God's creatures, I believe. In your thoughtful moods, Colonel Washington, you are very much like her."

"Thank you, I know of no higher tribute than can be paid a man than to say he is like a pure, good mother."

Later in the evening, when the ladies had retired, Noll's case was brought up for discussion. The Colonel repeated the story just as Noll had told it to him, and then appealed to the judgment of his guests as to whether he was right in asking of Noll what he did. Colonel Fairfax had urged that Noll forget, blot out as it were, all memory of his native land. He pictured a glowing career, which a young man just in the fullness of youth could follow, should the colonies succeed in establishing their indepen-

## In Point of Honor.

dence. So rabid were his arguments, however, that they confused himself, as well as the object of his would be beneficience.

"It seems to me, gentlemen, that a man who has been so basely used by the rulers of a country could surely retain no vestige of love for that land. I have told Noll to meet the memories of the past as one dead man might meet another dead man in some unknown place, and I think it good advice. He agrees with me that the colonies are abused, but he cannot consent to renounce his country to help us out."

"I think that both of you, gentlemen, are on the wrong line of argument," said Patrick Henry, accomplishing by a few words all in which the Colonel had failed. "It is not a question of giving up one's country or the love for it. You might as well bid a mother forget the grave where her first born is laid as to bid a man forget where his childhood feet have trod. Love of country is a natural passion in the human breast. It comes just as natural for us to love this country, and these homes of ours, as it does for the flowers to blossom. But there is something nobler, something higher than love of country—a patriotism that rises above all sections. It has no bounds; it knows no north, or south, or east, or west; it is not restricted to the narrow margins of a principality, but girdles the world—the love of liberty. The patriot lifts his eye around the world and sees a struggling people trying to throw off the yoke of oppression, and his soul goes out to them. If possible he will join in the shedding of kindred blood."

"Sir, your words have touched me deeply," Noll

### In Point of Honor.

exclaimed. "I freely admit the justice of the Colonies' contentions, and deeply deplore the action of the British government. Even your most hot-headed are ready and willing for a harmonious settlement, but destiny has ruled it otherwise. I love England, but as you say, Mr. Henry, I love liberty better. The fault that liberty is throttled lies not upon the conscience of my country, but upon her rulers. Some years ago there were voices to be heard favoring more lenient actions toward the colonies, but they stepped before the Juggernaut; they bowed before the will of an obstinate King, who has gathered around him only partisans to his own wishes. The French King saw the shadow of coming events when he signed the treaty of 1763, and the most conservative of Englishmen now admit, that he would never have ceded Canada to Great Britain, had it not been with the hope of securing American independence, and thereby striking an almost vital blow to England." Then turning to Colonel Fairfax, Noll continued:

"Colonel Fairfax, I will hesitate no longer; I love liberty well enough to even fight against my King. There is a vast distinction between what Mr. Henry set forth and what you proposed, and I marvel that we did not see it before. I will help fight for your country if you will allow me to cherish the memories of my native land. The pictures of my fathers are hanging silently in the ancestral halls in England, and an effort to turn their faces to the wall would be an affront to the dead." Then the man who was soon to hold in his grasp a destiny that would effect all nations, arose and extended his hand to Noll.

## CHAPTER XII.

### AS TO RAFFLES.



N the following morning all went to the shooting-match. The place selected was a shady grove to the left of the King's Inn, and admirably suited for the purpose. The Colonel had sent on previously, several fine beeves nicely quartered, besides numerous other things. There were other enthusiastic, rampant patriots in the country, and they also contributed toward the coming sport.

In all raffles it is the custom to put up each article and "rifle" it off. This consists in a limited number paying for the privilege of shooting for said article. The one excelling, carried off the spoils, and some were known to carry off a whole wagon load at very small cost. They were very popular and always well attended.

It was the purpose of Colonel Fairfax to take all money arising from the sale of chances and devote it to patriotic causes. Every one agreed that it was proper, and both visitors expressed themselves as being highly pleased with the scheme.

"I would that the country was full of such men as you, Colonel," said Henry. "For, if I am not badly mistaken, we will have need of funds, and that very soon."

Perhaps two hundred men were on the ground by ten o'clock. They were mostly all typical Americans of that age, dressed in the garb of hunters,

## In Point of Honor.

with the coon skin pouch, the deer's hoof for a charger, and the long flint-lock rifle, the which nothing was more deadly in that day. Soon the work of taking chances began. Each man went around, and seeing an article that he desired, he paid for a chance and the judges took down his name. By half past eleven, hundreds of shooting matches were in embryo. Of course, Kenton was there and in his glory. Meeting up with Noll, he exclaimed with the eagerness and happiness of a boy:

"See yonder beef quarter? I'll wager a first class beaver pelt to a foot of wampun that I take it home with me."

At twelve several of the matches were called off. The target consisted of a small board, upon which was pasted a white piece of paper with three concentric circles, varying in diameter from a half inch to an inch and a half. The marksman failing to put the ball within one of these circles was a poor shot, indeed, and his effort was not counted. The distance was seventy-five steps, and there was no regularity in shooting, each man calling for a target whenever it suited him to do so. Soon the indicated beef quarter came upon the block.

"Clear the track, boys; put up my target, Jim!" was shouted from the lips of Kenton as he strod to the place where the contestant was to stand. A rush of feet followed his voice. The crowd flocked to the right and left from the rifleman to the target, forming a living lane with about five feet in width, each head inclining inward to see the effect of the shot. The marksman stood looking as if he disdained entering into such an easy contest. Then he

## In Point of Honor.

threw his rifle to his shoulder, where it was poised for a second before bursting forth a sheet of flame. The ball entered the inner circle, and a wild shout rent the air. The excitement was kept up for two hours, and then it was announced that Patrick Henry would address the crowd.

Virginia, mother of states and statesmen, you never had within your legislative halls a more patriotic or eloquent orator than Patrick Henry.

He began his talk by repeating the history of Virginia from her earliest settlement, dwelling to some length upon the character and deeds of Nathenial Bacon, the young, brave, patriotic, eloquent and enthusiastic soul who had led the first insurrection against tyranny in the New World—rebelling against the despotism of Charles II. He recited in that eloquent and fiery manner, so peculiar to him, the deeds of their fathers in years agone, and reminded them that the work of Smith, Gosnel, and Bacon had not been in vain, when it became necessary for Virginia to show to the world that there was no place for despotism within her borders. He recalled the fact that Virginia had furnished the first American who gave his life for liberty—Thomas Hanford. And then he named in order those who had followed for freedom's sake. The people cheered and the orator grew more eloquent.

He summed up the incidents which had occurred in the sister colonies, naming them one by one, until he came to the ascension of George III. Then it was that his voice changed from recital to that of deep feeling. He reminded them of the fact that since his coronation that monarch had truly exer-

## In Point of Honor.

cised the scepter of despotism. He seemed to regard the American colonies as his personal property to be used solely for the benefit of himself and his partisans. His had been a continuous reign of repeated injuries and usurpations; he had never consented to anything like justice. He had abolished charters having the benefit of free laws and set up arbitrary and proprietary governments. He had suppressed free thought and tried to chain reason, and had sneered at the complaints of his subjects. Only a few short months ago the venerated charter of Massachusetts had been annulled. His hearers knew what had followed. The address which had been sent to the King had been ignored, and instead of redress, he had sent an armed fleet and an army of ten thousand men to reduce the colonies by force of arms.

"The day of battle is here!" the orator exclaimed. "The tocsin of war was sounded when the British seized and fortified Boston Neck. There are those who will tell you that there is yet hope of a peaceable adjustment, but I tell you that hope is dead! We must either fight or become slaves. The time has come for us to emulate the deeds of our fathers. Are we ready?"

"Ready!" and the air was rent with the answer from two hundred throats. A wild and exciting time followed, and it was some time before the orator could resume.

"Does Sam Adams cringe before the dictates, or halt at the ban placed upon him by Parliament? You know that he does not. Neither will Virginians stoop to become serfs. We are not dummies, pos-

## In Point of Honor.

sessed of minds like potter's clay, which receives passively and with unresisting acquiescence whatever the tyrant chooses to impress upon it; but we are men—active, strong, resolute, thoughtful men—possessing equal rights, and equal to any potentate that ever sat upon a throne. The mighty hand of Great Britain has stretched forth to crush the Pilgrims, and they are few and weak; but in the memories of the past, the aspirations of the present, and the hopes of the future, we worship at the shrine of Liberty, and England will find us ready to lay down our lives in Liberty's defense. Those who were with yonder gentlemen—George Washington and Colonel Fairfax, I mean—in the French and Indian war, have demonstrated how well we can fight."

He thrilled them with the subtle witchery of the orator; he mystified them with the magic marvel of the speaker's art; he juggled with their senses, and moulded their thoughts to suit his own, and made them feel as he did. That was the day of great men—Hancock, Henry, Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Washington. Their mighty hearts are still now, but though such vast currents flow into the past, smaller streams yet remain to continue the work of the ages, and patriotism and liberty shall not perish from the land of the free. What are the fruits of their labors, you ask? The result has been written with an iron pen upon the pages of history—the greatest Republic the world has ever seen.

After the speaking, the shooting began again and continued up into the night—the contestants using candles, one near the sight of the rifle and two on each side the target to shoot by. Silas Wilkins, the

## In Point of Honor.

sqatter and trapper, was there, and he and Kenton knew no end to their enjoyment. Silas had taken up his abode on the Colonel's plantation with Betty, now his wife.

"What do you think of such shooting, Mr. Noll?" asked Washington, as they stood looking upon the scene. "Could an army be formed of such material as that?"

"An army of ten thousand such men, well provisioned and disciplined, could hold in check any number England might send against them."

"Discipline!" exclaimed Henry, overhearing Noll's remark, "they do not need discipline. They are the children of patriotism, and patriotism is the child of travail and sorrow, which is the best school of discipline."

"A metaphor in scope, sir," answered Noll. "But I hardly see how England can maintain a lengthy war in this land. At present her armies are scattered to the four winds of heaven and she dare not move any part from its present position. She has practically no reserve, and the only way I see for her getting troops is to hire them."

"What is the opinion of conservative Englishmen as to the probable outcome of war, in case the colonies do rebel?" Washington asked.

"They can see but one result—the independence of America. England's recent wars have weakened her, and should the colonies prove too feeble, France is ready and anxious to lend a helping hand."

When Colonel Fairfax and his guest left the grounds it was about five in the afternoon. The Colonel was in good spirits, for it seemed to him the day

## In Point of Honor.

had been wrought with much good. The reference Henry had made about him being in the French and Indian war pleased him. The freshness and beauty of the spring day pleased him. The day was one of those pleasant, balmy affairs that sometimes come in the latter part of April—the early songsters were beginning to hop about the trees, and here and there had begun to peep up little patches of grass, denoting that spring would soon hide the rugged outlines of the world.

As the King's Inn was only a short distance up the river from Fairfax Hall, the gentlemen had walked over. While returning through the little strip of woodland the incidents of the day were freely discussed, at least by Mr. Henry and the Colonel. Washington sought more the society of Noll.

"Colonel Fairfax informs me that you held a commission in the royal army, Mr. Noll; may I presume to ask of what rank?"

"Brigadier-general, sir."

"Of horse, or foot?"

"Foot."

"Pardon me for my seeming curiosity, I assure you that the questions I ask are prompted by deepest interest, but should you not care to answer I shall not feel offended in the least if you decline."

"I assure you, Colonel Washington, that I appreciate your kindly interest and will gladly answer any question or explain any point you may wish to know to the best of my ability."

"Thank you. Did you rise from the ranks, or——"

"I received a captain's commission and was promoted from that."

## In Point of Honor.

"Then you understand the drilling of raw recruits?"

"I have frequently been detailed for such duty."

Just then the voice of Henry attracted their attention, and they paused in their own discourse to listen to what he was saying—impelled to do so by his earnestness.

"I believe not, Colonel," he was saying. "Your fears will never take shape. As you are perhaps aware, the people of England know comparatively little about us, and we care less about them. Although speaking a common language, yet the interests of the two countries are severally incompatible, and what constitutes the sovereign power of one does not suit the other. A change in the present conditions would show each to the other in a better light. The people of both England and America are descendants of the old Germanic races against which the tides of the Roman Empire flowed but to recede in broken fragments. The blood of the Anglo-Saxon courses through the veins of each. When these colonies shall have become free and independent, and when they turn from internal to external affairs, I cannot believe that our blood will become recreant to an immortal lineage, as you fear. It is in the nature of the Anglo-Saxon to predominate, and in the years to come England and America may quarrel and wrangle over matters of state, but should another nation, or a consort of nations, seek the overthrow of one, you will find the other there—shoulder to shoulder to the last man."

They were nearing Fairfax Hall by this time, and were entering upon the graveled driveway when, as

## In Point of Honor.

if by common impulse, they all halted. There was a gradual incline from where they were, leading directly to the house. The sun had fallen just behind the crest of this incline, leaving a rich, glowing scene of purple, and crimson, and cloths of gold, while the giants of the forest gracefully arched their arms above the driveway making, as it were, a frame for the fiery picture. Suddenly, as the men stood looking, in the very center of this flood of crimson light a human form appeared; drawn against the brilliant background as distinctly and as palpable as if placed there by one fell touch of the brush of Deity. The figure was tall and powerful; the attitude firm and resolute. For a moment it stood facing toward them; then the head turned and Noll saw the outlines of a solitary eagle's feather floating out behind.

"Waunatoncah, by the shades of my fathers!" escaped from his lips; and then a flood of memory, bringing back the past, swept into his brain, and he quickly pressed forward to where the Indian stood.

"I have sought my pale-face father," were the first words of the Sachem, "to tell him that the dogs, the Wyandots, have dared to leave the prints of their moccasins in yonder forest. I trailed them from across the great mountains but lost their track at the river. They now lie hid like cowards in the bushes."

"Some marauding party bent on mischief," exclaimed Washington.

"How many are they?" was asked.

"They number more than the fingers on my hands and Sussex, the pale-face chief, is at their head."

## In Point of Honor.

"Sussex—— The luck of hell!" exclaimed Noll.

See yon vulture soaring skyward; see him stoop;  
his quarry a wounded deer. Another, seeing his  
downward plunge, follows from some aerial height.  
Then a third and a fourth, until the air grows black  
with the hurtling of their wings. So it is with  
trouble—disasters never come singly.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SOME HOURS OF INDECISION.

IT was now six days after the raffles and nothing further had been heard of the band of Wyandots, although considerable anxiety was felt at Fairfax Hall. The fact that Sussex was with the Indians made Colonel Fairfax apprehensive that some blow was intended him, or some member of his family. Everyone felt that their presence in the neighborhood meant mischief of some kind.

"It's the work of those damned English emissaries, Mr. Kenton," said the Colonel, as he and several of his friends were discussing the matter. "I tell you, Great Britain is not only sending out men among those hellish demons to incite them to the work of rapine and murder, but she is furnishing them with guns and ammunition to give practical expression to their enmity."

"The American Indian, as a rule, does not need much persuasion to begin the work of rapine and massacre," observed old man Kenton, John's father.

"A demonstrated fact, sir..... Now that war is almost inevitable, England realizes that she must put forth the most gigantic efforts to subdue these colonies, or she will be confronted with rebellions among her colonial possessions all around the globe. She thinks, perhaps that the Indian will help her, but I think that he will make matters worse, or——"

"Where are you going, Ilma?" interrupted Mrs.

## In Point of Honor.

Fairfax, as that young lady and Betty Wilkins came from the house, the latter with a rifle in her hand.

"Betty is going to give me some lessons in target practice, mother."

"Don't go too far from the house, child," cautioned old lady Kenton. "I woke up this morning laughing, and that is a sure sign that I, or some of my friends, will have trouble soon."

"Aunt Molly, you are always consulting your oracles. I believe that your pessimist's only excuse for the sunshine is to make life's shadows deeper, don't you, Betty?"

"I don't know," answered Betty. "Sometimes I believe in dreams and such like. I know that the night before my father and mother were killed I had the sweetest dreams. You know that they do say that when your slumber is a happy dreaming, it is a sure sign that your heart will break the next day."

"Perhaps——" and then eagerly: "But do you know, Betty, that yesterday while I was out on the river with my rifle, I heard the call of a wild turkey just across in the woods. I wish you could get a shot at one to-day, don't you?" said Ilma, as they took the path to where her canoe was tied.

A faint caw of a crow, apparently from the tree-tops across the stream, was heard as the young ladies approached the river; the sound of what seemed to be the hooting of an owl, came from farther down. All bright and joyous Ilma tripped down to where her boat was moored, and soon she and Betty were rowing about, enjoying the fresh spring day. Betty had been reared in a society where out-door exercise and gun-practice were a part of the creed, and

## In Point of Honor.

Ilma envied her of her skill with the rifle, and hoped some day to be her equal. She had prevailed upon her father and he had ordered for her a rifle of finest workmanship, all inlaid with silver and pearl.

"Listen! Betty, I believe to my soul I heard those turkeys again!" exclaimed Ilma, as she became all eager attention.

Sure enough, the call of a wild turkey was heard by the two girls just in the woods on the opposite bank. Betty picked up the paddle and commenced shoving the boat up the stream. When far enough up, she pushed in toward shore and let the canoe drift under the overhanging limbs, at the same time keeping a close lookout for the fowl.

Ilma was intently looking on shore, as they came opposite where the call was first heard, when the rustling of some tall dry grass just below them attracted her attention. Turning, her eyes rested with consternation upon the painted face of an Indian warrior. Then she heard the deafening report of a gun close to her ear, and while she looked, the face of the savage assumed a vacant, deathly stare, and then he lurched forward.

Betty immediately dropped the smoking rifle to the bottom of the boat and grabbed the paddle, hastily dipping it into the water to shove out from the approach of three more Indians, who were leaping toward them. So excited were her actions, however, that she failed to note in which direction she was backing the boat, and was entangled in some brush before she knew it. Before she could free the canoe, an Indian waded into the water and grasped the prow. She quickly sprang to her feet, at the

## In Point of Honor.

same time swinging the blade into the air and bringing it down with terrible force at the Indian's head. The savage avoided the blow by ducking, but in doing so he gave the boat a violent jerk. This almost threw the brave little woman out, and in clutching at the sides of the canoe for support, she lost her weapon. By this time the other Indians came up, and the three dragged the small craft to the shore. Upon an Indian taking hold of her arm, Betty uttered three ear-piercing screams, which caused the savages to use the girls rather roughly the next few minutes while they were binding and gagging them.

The next move of the red men shows with what sagacity they act. No sooner were the young ladies securely bound, when one of them turned the boat upside down, and putting his foot against the light thing, he shoved it a hundred feet or more out into the stream. Then turning to the girls he signified that no further out-cry or struggle was to be made under penalty of being brained with the tomahawk he held in his hand. Placing his hands in a funnel-like shape over his mouth, he uttered three distinct and loud caws of a crow. Waiting some minutes, the signal was repeated. Again the hooting of an owl was heard down the river, and immediately upon hearing it, the Indians took up their march into the interior. After traveling some miles several other Indians joined them, and then the bands were taken from off the captives and they were allowed the freedom of speech.

The captors took every precaution known to an Indian to hide their trail—directing their steps to a thick cane-brake, where they separated and made

## In Point of Honor.

their way through it with the utmost caution, with the object of making their foot-prints so faint that pursuit would be almost out of the question. Having assured themselves, so far as possible, that the trail was hidden from the scrutiny of any one attempting to follow, the Wyandots made a turn directly to the west and pushed forward without delay toward the mountains. Upon seeing this, the hearts of the unfortunate girls misgave them, and they became almost utterly disconsolate. Yet both knew that what would be possible for humans to do, would be done as soon as they were missed.

And such was the case, indeed, although there were some hours of indecision before the right move was made. Those at the Hall had heard the rifle shot, closely followed by Betty's screams, and soon all of them were standing upon the river bank where Ilma's boat was want to be. The practiced eye of Silas Wilkins was the first to note the up-turned canoe as it floated down the stream. He pointed it out to the others.

Fate first smiles upon, then stabs the human heart. Like a sudden flaw in a rare jewel, sorrow had touched the Fairfax homestead about two years ago, and then misfortunes had followed in rapid succession. There could be but one explanation to the up-turned boat to Colonel Fairfax—Ilma was drowned. Upon him announcing his belief, the negroes set up a low, dismal wail that added more tensely and heavily to the situation.

Wilkins plunged into the water and began swimming toward the canoe, while Noll and old man Kenton rushed down the stream to where the cutter

## In Point of Honor.

was moored, and were soon rowing with all their might for the same object. Just as they were relaxing their efforts to come alongside the canoe, their attention was arrested by the appearance of John Kenton and Waunatoncah on the opposite shore. So after taking Wilkins in, and righting the smaller craft, they rowed over to where the hunter was standing.

"What's the matter over yonder?" asked John, as the prow of the boat grated on the shore.

"We fear that Ilma and Mrs. Wilkins have been drowned," answered Noll, almost choking with the words.

Kenton exchanged looks with the Indian.

"I told you so, didn't I, Big Hatchet?" he said. "It comes just as natural for an Indian to be in some devilment as it does for a 'coon to stick his foot in a hole in a log—and get caught. How long ago was this, and how did it happen?"

"About two hours ago Miss Ilma and Mrs. Wilkins left the house to engage in some target practice. We heard them shooting out here, and then, just after a shot, we were startled by hearing three screams, and coming down to the river we saw the overturned boat."

"Did you find a paddle with the canoe?"

"No, by Jinks, we didn't!" exclaimed Wilkins, as a sudden gleam of hope lighted up his intense, swarthy face, designing why Kenton had asked the question.

"Well, it is perhaps up the river somewhere, so, Big Hatchet, you follow up this side until you come to yonder bending willow. Keep a close lookout for

## In Point of Honor.

that paddle and anything else you may find. I'll go back with the boat, but if you find anything, let us know."

The scene that met their gaze, on nearing the other shore, touched each heart. Mrs. Fairfax was sitting upon the ground with her face covered in her lap, while her husband was stooping by her side with one hand upon her shoulder. There was something so touching, yet at the same time so commanding, in the grief of the old people, that no one had offered a word of consolation. Colonel Fairfax stooped there utterly unconscious of the surrounding presence, his features exposed and working with deep anguish, while heavy tears fell from his eyes and rolled unheeded down his furrowed cheeks to the ground. The grating of the boat on the sands seemed to arouse him, for he stirred as if remembering something, and presently he arose and approached John Kenton.

"John, do you think we can recover the bodies?"

"Sir, God knows I hope it is not so bad as what you think, although I'm afraid the truth will be bad enough. Had you not noticed that the paddle was not floating near the boat, and was nowhere in sight? Have you forgotten that there was a band of Wyandots in yonder woods not over a week ago? Think you that they had no object in coming here? If you have forgotten, I have not, and for the past week Waunatoncah and I have been endeavoring to locate them and find out their object. This morning we succeeded in finding where they had hid, and now it seems that they, themselves, have unfolded their mission. The reason we have not discovered their

## In Point of Honor.

whereabouts sooner, was that they have used the utmost caution, hiding their camp in the heart of that immense cane-brake to the north, there, on the other side of the river. Waunatoncah is now over across the river seeing what he can find, and——”

Kenton had no more than uttered the last words, when a long, exultant cry resounded from across the stream.

“There, I knew it!” he exclaimed, “the Great Hatchet has found something to interest us. Colonel, it is my opinion that not another Indian on this continent possesses the sagacity of that native. Let’s cross over and see for ourselves what he has found.”

The row across the river was made with dispatch, for the negroes had learned something of the hope Kenton had brought, and they bent to the oars with a will. Arriving on the opposite shore, they found Great Hatchet standing near the bunch of dry cut-grass, pointing with his index finger, while, what looked like the shadow of a sarcastic smile was playing around his mouth.

“The dogs, the Wyandots, must even leave their trail in the water,” he said, as he pointed out the Indian whom Betty had shot.

After examining the body for some seconds, it was thrown into the stream, and then they took up the trail and followed it some distance out into the forest. For some distance from the river the ground was low and marshy, and no trouble was had in distinguishing the route of the Wyandots. When high ground was reached, however, Kenton called a halt, and soon after, the party returned to prepare

### In Point of Honor.

for the pursuit, which all knew would be one to try the endurance, and of long, close trailing.

"Kenton, I shall not insist on accompanying you this time," said Colonel Fairfax, as the same party of four who had followed Sussex before, were being rowed across the James. "But I will raise a party and follow on behind. Be sure and leave a broad trail for us to follow. I intend to get enough men to wipe out the whole Wyandot nation, if it becomes necessary to do so."

It is not the purpose here to follow Kenton, Noll, Wilkins, and Waunatoncah in their pursuit through that vast wilderness that lay between the settlement and the mountains, and on beyond. Neither will be given in detail how they tracked the wary savages through voiceless solitudes, up shallow creek beds, through cane-brakes, and how the Wyandots never lost their wariness in using all means known to Indian cunning to hide their tracks. The journey was a long one and, on account of the excellent manner in which the Wyandots conducted their flight, Kenton's party was unable at any time to gain upon them, and some days they even lost ground. Therefore we will pass over a period of some thirty days and dwell for a time in an Indian village, just in the shadow of some overhanging hills on the banks of the upper Cumberland.

## CHAPTER XIV.

IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE.

**E**LWAYS the stars are; always love. Co-associates, compères in the great dominion of Time—co-equal with Time; forged in the furnace of the ever-Present—alike primal, co-existent and to be.

In the contemplation of the stars we naturally associate them with love. Love, to be sublime, must be commensurate with the universal principles of the beautiful imbedded in human nature. Thus are we moved to the consideration of love as something so fine as to arouse a sense of awe akin to that we feel when we try to imagine the bounds of the universe.

Love! Who, of all the millions of millions, has not known its joys and sorrows; who has not felt its tender sympathies, its thrills? No record of one in the long, long cycles of the world. No man, no woman ever passed from this earth without loving some creature; by some creature loved—unless it be the craven wretch who hides his implement of death under a handkerchief\*—but wait, he has a mother—God, pity her.

Today Ilma was sitting on a rudely constructed seat in front of a wigwam. It was the love that one

\*By a strange co-incidence, just as the author was penning the above words the news flashed over the wires of the assassination of President McKinley.

### In Point of Honor.

man bore her, you might say, that had placed her there. Yesterday that man had approached her for the first time. For some reason he had not shown himself at all during that long, weary march, yet she had felt that he was at no great distance. What a long, long journey that had been, and how weary she had become, and now that it was ended what was to be the outcome? And then the light that had appeared in the man's eyes while in her presence—it seemed meek and awed. What did it mean? In fact, whence would come the answers to all these thousands of questions that were constantly surging through her brain?

Three days—three eternities—and still no sign of father or friends! Would they never come! Betty, who had been reared to much sterner things, had ceased to look for succor from their friends, at least for some time, but Ilma felt that they would, they must come. Yet she was torn by contending emotions. How could they come? Could human skill follow the trackless path the Wyandots had left? And then that other fearful, horrible, unanswerable question would spring up—what was Sussex's object in abducting her? Would he try and force a companionship with her——

How insignificant is human intellect and its boasted power when fear of an unknown, unspeakable danger is tugging at the heart.....Human beings, here locked up underneath the stars in petty vanities, crowding each other on the streets of Time; never pausing in their self-importance to comprehend their foolish hurry and vain conceits—unless it be when brought face to face with an awful seri-

## In Point of Honor.

ousness, such as was now confronting Ilma. Her emotions almost choked her.

"Betty," she said, "come out here and talk to me, or my thoughts will drive me mad. Do you not realize the awful, horrible position in which I am placed! And we are perfectly helpless—just as helpless as we were when in our cradles. Surely, surely father and Mr. Wilkins will come to release us soon. It seems to me that if we were they, and they were we, that I would turn—yet I know that such a thought is unreasonable. O, that I might have surcease from this hopeless, mocking uncertainty!"

"There is no use in feeling that way," said Betty, as she came from the wigwam and took a seat near the unfortunate girl.

"O, Betty, we must do something!"

"That's it—we must do something! You hit it. Of course, if we stay here long enough our friends will find us, for Silas Wilkins has not followed me around ever since I was fourteen years old to then let a red Indian steal me just as he has his hands on me. But if we stay until our friends come, there is no telling what that Sussex may attempt, therefore I've been thinking of how we would, at least, try and effect our own escape."

"O, yes, do anything! The dangers of the wilderness can surely not be greater than the ones we confront here. We may starve, but I had rather starve than——"

"Now, there's where you are wrong—we will not starve either, if I can get possession of your rifle, which, as you know, is in the council lodge. I know

### In Point of Honor.

that you have not my confidence, but then you was not raised in the wilderness. Now, you just listen to a little reason for a minute, and then put your trust in me. From what you told me of what that scoundrel, Sussex, said to you yesterday, I've come to the conclusion that he is either crazy, or it is his intention to appear very meek and humble. He's mean enough to commit any crime, but if he thinks it possible, he will try and win your compassion before resorting to violent measures. Now should he approach you again soon, do not shut up like a terrapin, as you did yesterday, but encourage him to talk—make him believe he is succeeding in his object, whatever it may be. Just leave the rest to me. These fools don't know that I was raised up in the wilderness, or they would keep a closer watch over us. Just let me get my hands on that rifle!"

It was just as Betty said—the guard over them was loose, they being even allowed to walk about among the wigwams undisturbed. The fact was, the Indians never thought that the two captives would dare make an effort to escape, therefore no especial vigilance was assumed. Betty had taken advantage of this the previous evening to wander around the village, at the same time assuming a boldness that had pleased her captors. After saying a few comforting words to Ilma, and giving her some good advice, she again set off on another round. As she had stated, the Wyandots had placed Ilma's rifle in the council lodge, and it was now her purpose to see, if possible, what would be the best course to pursue in reaching it. She was a plucky little woman, this Betty, one of the few things that

## In Point of Honor.

held intrinsic value to the typical American of that day—powder, lead, salt, maize—a woman who dared.

Immediately upon the arrival of the Wyandots, a council of the chiefs was held, at which the warriors of the entire camp were present. Grave and grim they had sat while the disposal of the prisoners was being passed upon. Then Ilma's rifle had been introduced. They had never seen a gun quite so beautiful as that, although their English friends had furnished quite a number of them weapons of similar pattern. It had been passed from one to the other, each minutely examining its carvings and inlaying. After much deliberation, it was decided to place the gun among the venerated keepings of the nation, therefore it was turned over to the chief medicine man, who placed it among other sacred keepings in the council lodge. Betty had kept a close watch over all of their movements, and knowing much of the Indian customs, although not understanding the language, she had put two and two together, thereby reasoning out a correct solution of the rifle's destiny.

As Betty left Ilma's side, Sussex made his appearance. He seemed to have been watching and waiting, by his approach, for such an opportunity.

"Ah, Miss Ilma, has your companion decided upon a stroll along our principal boulevard?" he said, with a feeble attempt at levity. His approach had been so silent that she had not heard him, therefore his voice had the effect of startling her.

"Don't be frightened," he pleaded. "Don't run

## In Point of Honor.

from me, I shall not hurt you in any way."

"Hurt me! Would that you WOULD hurt me! Would that you would kill me! I had ten thousand times rather that, than have you force your presence upon me."

"Ah, I know what you would say, and I know that you have the right to think it; but upon what honor I have left, I had just as soon think of harming my mother as you."

"God, pity your mother, and protect from your callous thoughts."

"Ah, Miss Ilma, you don't understand—I know, you think me utterly black, but, believe me, there is a little something left here," and he touched his breast.

"A little," she said, with intense meaning, "but you could cover that little with a fleck of dust."

The man blanched—he could not help but know her meaning, and feel the supreme contempt with which she regarded him.

"Why is it, Captain Sussex, that you wait until Betty leaves to seek me? Havn't you absolute power here? Surely you do not have to wait—you can command."

"Don't!" he said, "your words hurt me! God, am I so utterly black! I have known greater wrongs—but then they were not published. It is not so much the nature of the crime, but the circumstance. The world has such a common trick of kicking a man when once he has started to fall.....Wait—I know what you would say—but you have only seen the dark side—there is a good side, and I'll tell you of it, if you but let me. At least, you cannot help but

## In Point of Honor.

admit that there is a shadow of an excuse—and pity me.

“You see, your life and mine have been in such different atmospheres. God, there is no comparison. You have breathed fresh, pure air; mine has been the sulphurous fumes from hell. I know it now, that it is too late. Listen; I had a friend once, and a sweetheart—O, a man can love more than once; I’m not a fool, whatever else I may be. My father was rich then, and I was courted—the only heir, you see. That was in the days when my friends called me a genius, and I thought I was destined to astonish the world. But my father was ruined by honorable men, and—God, save the mark—died of his own hands.....That’s where I get my weakness, you say? Perhaps—I don’t know. But, anyway, then it was that friend was no longer my friend; and my sweetheart proved false. God, I have certainly had my share of life’s knocks!

“Well, the bubble bursted then. To me, life, and its all, was a fraud. There was nothing substantial but the animal—just beastly—er—passion. Intellect was a shadow; honor a plaything; religion a cloak. Evil, the animal, had always triumphed. Every man was but the natural enemy of every other man. Creeds sprang up just to tear down other creeds. God—but why do I call on God—there was once a time when I would have eliminated Him from Creation. Then, if that were so, it was but natural that I prey upon my fellow man, just as my fellow man had preyed upon me and mine. Why should I feel any remorse of conscience? What mattered it to me if a woman’s heart ached, or a man’s prospects

## In Point of Honor.

were ruined? It was but the inevitable law, and the pain would soon pass—then oblivion.

“But there came a time when I desired a change. It was when I met you. Ah, Ilma, Ilma—don’t turn away like that! Don’t you know that in the great wastes of the earth, Creation has so ordained that here and there are little oasis. I love you, Ilma; God, how I love you, and you are the one oasis in the great waste of my being. But how far you seem from me, although I have you here by me—Ah, don’t look at me that way—don’t rise—listen—I have but little more to say.

“Yes, when first I saw you I loved you, and it was not like anything I had ever known. It touched my inmost being; it effected the trend of my life; it dominated my intellect; it is the keynote of my thoughts.

“Well, after the bubble bursted, after every purer impulse had become callous, I took pleasure in mastering the foibles, or what I was pleased to term the quibbles, of my associates. I was brutally careless of their rights; grossly materialistic; cynically skeptical of all they claimed was good, and that has elevated the world. Yes, I see it in your eye—alien to all finer feelings. So much so was I this way that I made enemies where I might have made friends, and now I have nowhere to turn. I tell you this that you may in some way, if possible, understand why I brought you here.

“I heard it whispered among those of my associates that I was not only a genius, but had the soul of a satyr, and I boasted it in my heart.....Fool!—I, who had scoffed at what I was pleased to style

### In Point of Honor.

the weaknesses of men, and felt bored when in their presence; felt, in my petty vanity, that I was vastly their superior, have come to realize that the sweetest thing in life, and that which gives the most pleasure, is the companionship of one's fellows.....God, if I had not thrown those golden moments away!

"A human derelict, floating on the sea of Life, from the port of 'What might have been' to—what and where is the destination!

"One evening—it seems so long ago—I was lying in my wigwam on a bed of softest rushes and furs, which these simple children of the forest have so generously prepared for me. The shades of night had settled and the village had given itself to slumber. I lay tossing, thinking, fearing—praying in my heart that sleep might bring oblivion. I was groping in walks grown desolate, in Hope's hushed halls. Of all the voices that I used to love and hear, there was but one left, and, ghost-like, it went haunting all the echoing chambers of the past. The voice was that of Memory. Memory! Remorse! Memory! Remorse! They have almost eaten my heart out! Every thought an accusation, every accusation a truth; freighted with sarcasm and derision when I tried to reason; slow-dropping, burning like vitriol!

"Suddenly, as I lay there, I became aware of a disturbance at the folds of my wigwam. Looking in that direction, to my horror, I saw floating in the air a human hand, the index finger pointing with terrible accusation straight at my soul. With a mighty effort I sprang up. For one awful moment it was thus, but in that moment all the acts and thoughts

## In Point of Honor.

of my life passed in review. I saw a human being, placed upon the firmest pedestal of God's Creation—Intellect and Reason. I saw him—God, save the mark—rise up in his petty vanity and flaunt himself in the face of that Creation. Then, phantom-like, a crystal cup was held out to him. 'I will drink,' he said, 'a respite ere this poor dumb soul is killed,' —and drained the chalice to the dregs. Then I felt my soul loose itself from this earthly shell and go bounding down, down to the very brink of hell; and the hand went pursuing, racing, gaining. Just before my soul reached that awful darkness, another hand appeared, small and beautiful, which grasped the larger and led it away. Then my soul came back to me, and——

"Ilma! Ilma, don't you see? It was a seance given unto me, showing me whereby I might save my soul. There was but one in all the world like the hand that rescued my spirit from utter darkness—so I went for you. I brought you here, Ilma, that you might take from heaven's azure the disgrace that sin had painted there."

The man ceased speaking. An ominous stillness, it seemed to Ilma, followed. With bated breath she looked up. The man's face was white and set, and great, dark circles were beneath the eyes, which had an awed, yet wild stare to them. What did it mean? Did he really mean and believe all he had been saying to her? If he did, then he was——

An Indian flitted past; another—and then another; and still others. With a sharp intake of her breath, Ilma arose to her feet. Turning, as if to speak to Sussex, she found that he had gone. Everywhere was

## In Point of Honor.

the wildest confusion; women and children jabbering and pointing; armed warriors all rushing in one direction—toward the river. Wherefore the disturbance? Where had Betty—— Ah, yonder she was, out there running with all her might toward the timber, something closely guarded in her arms. Now she has stopped and is stooping by some tangled briars. See—she has turned now, and is coming hurriedly back to the village.

A cloud scudded past, and the sun leaped forth. A king-fisher, aroused from his seeming lethargy, uttered his discordant note, flitted from his perch, and for a time shone black against the azure of heaven. A low, monotonous, undefined noise swells upon the air, which has something sinister, ominous in it. Dull and heavy, it was like the quivering hush before the storm.

## CHAPTER XV.

A FOREST DRAMA.



HAT is it, Betty?" asked Ilma, when Betty came up to within speaking distance. Betty paused to regain her breath before answering. Her exertions had exhausted her.

"A band of armed warriors have appeared on the other side of the river and this uproar is the result. The Wyandots are now preparing to dispute their crossing."

"I did not know what had happened, and when I saw you running out yonder I was very much frightened, for I did not know but what they were after you. What was that you had in your arms?"

"Your rifle—but where is Sussex?"

"He was here just a minute ago, but disappeared when this uproar commenced. Betty, beyond a doubt, his sins have driven him mad."

"Hope they have—'twould serve him right."

As before stated, the village was in a state of wild confusion. The Wyandots were in a land where every band was the enemy of every other band, therefore the sudden appearance of another war party threw the Wyandots into some disorder. In such a time there was little time for parley, so upon being apprised of the danger, each warrior armed himself as quickly as possible, and rushed to the river to dispute the right of way, while the squaws, amid the shrieks of the young, the screams

## In Point of Honor.

of themselves, and the howlings of the crones, hastily struck the tents, placed them on pack-poles, and otherwise prepared for retreat, should it become necessary. Betty stood watching this scene until the confusion was at its height, then plucking Ilma's sleeve, she said:

"It is now, or never—follow me."

The village was on the edge of a little patch of blue-grass, which touched the river, in all a quarter of a mile wide. Woods fringed the patch, in shape like a rainbow. The bunch of briars, previously spoken of, was on the opposite side from the village, and Betty made straight for this brier patch. In the confusion she hoped to reach the opposite woods and so escape without detection. In a calmer moment she would have seen the utter futility of such a course, but woman never did stop to reason in such a stress. They had perhaps traversed a little over half the distance when Ilma cast a glance backward.

"My God, Betty, look!"

Two Indian braves bounded from the village and were running after them. Betty made greater exertions, and fear added wings to Ilma's feet. They were no match for such fleet runners, however, and by the time they had reached the patch of briars the Indians were within forty yards. Betty snatched the rifle from its hiding place, leveled it quickly, and pulled the trigger—

Snap—swish—a black something shot by—an arrow stuck, quivering, in the breast of the Indian at whom Betty had aimed. The Wyandot stopped, shrank back a little, bended his head until his vision

## In Point of Honor.

rested upon the place where the arrow had entered, took hold of the missive of death with both hands, hesitated a moment whether to withdraw it, while his countenance darkened with the inextinguishable expression of death, blended with the look of ferocity and pride of a savage nature. His companion, seeing him stop, halted also, and noting the cause, cast round him a look of supernatural awe before attempting succor——

A man shot by, another, and yet another. With quick, powerful strides they went bounding toward the two Indians. 'Twas but the work of a moment to secure the living, scalp the dead, throw the body into the patch of briers, then return to where the two girls were standing. Ilma saw Betty being clasp within the arms of her husband, and then a hand was laid upon her own arm. She looked up—into the eyes of Arthur Howard Noll. She then let her gaze wander in a helpless way back to the village, and the expression that instantly overspread her face caused them all to turn in alarm. A man rushed around the wigwam to where she had been sitting, stopped in confusion, then hastily parted the folds of the tent. Not finding his object there, he turned and his eyes rested upon the party standing motionless by the bunch of briers. A frantic, mad dash for an hundred yards, then slower and slower, until he finally stopped, and wheeling, made the same mad dash back.

"Hugh!" exclaimed Waunatoncah, and turned and quickly approached the dark, sombre walls of the forest. Soon they were swallowed up in the great wilderness, enmeshed in its vast labyrinths; press-

## In Point of Honor.

ing deep into the shadowy and silent solitude, guided by a purpose and impelled to great exertions by the first law of nature—self-preservation. Before them, ever as a guide, stood the mountains—battle-mmented walls upon which the sentinels of Time held lookout over the world. Presently they passed down into a low basin by the marge of the river, and in the shadow of a pilot hill. A vast solitude was around them, engulfing a mighty mystery. Traversing this basin, they came to a thick canebrake, through which they labored, suffering much from the hot, stifling air. The exertions caused by passing through this canebrake were so great as to cause them to make a halt in order that Betty and Ilma might rest.

"Where is father?" asked Ilma, directing the question to Noll.

"He and some trusty friends are following in our wake. They are perhaps now in the mountains, and we will probably meet them tomorrow."

Waunatoncah soon grew restless, and Kenton noting his impatience, suggested that they move on.

"Yes, yes," assented Ilma. "O, I had forgotten that we will be followed! The sight of friends had driven the terror, the horror from which we have just escaped from my mind. Don't stop to rest on our account again, for surely if we withstood the fatigue of such a journey to this wilderness, fear will enable us to make even greater exertions on the return."

At length, passing down a long slope, they came to a shallow, brawling stream, whose waters went dancing over a pebbled bed. Waunatoncah waded

### In Point of Honor.

into this stream, followed by the captured Wyandot. Seeing the others hesitate, he signified that the step was imperative, so they all waded in and followed down it until they again came to the Cumberland. On the right was a long rocky escarpment, so edging the foot of the precipitous hills, they followed up the larger stream, at last entering a deep glen, darkened by the overhanging foliage. The sunshine and shadows fell in flecks and little patches upon them as they passed swiftly, silently under the rustling branches. Passing from this glen they came out upon a tract of open woodland. Everywhere the ground was trodden bare by myriad hoofs, and Kenton knew that he was in the very haunts of those countless buffaloes of which Daniel Boone had told him.

"By the Great Horn Spoon, just look!" he exclaimed, as he saw the countless hoof marks, and noticed that the cortex of every tree was worn smooth and slick where the great sluggish beasts had rubbed their itching sides. While Kenton was not a slave to his rifle, yet the sirens of the forest were alluring, for he was a mighty hunter and the sight of game and adventure had great charm for him. No amount of danger could have kept his heart from leaping at seeing those signs. Soon they commenced passing a few straggling beasts, and presently Great Hatchet stopped, assuming a listening position. Upon the air was borne a dull roaring from a distance. "Bisons!" he uttered, then again moved forward.

A half mile farther on and the tainted air betokened the propinquity of a salt-sulphur spring, so

### In Point of Honor.

grateful to the appetites of the gramnivorae. A quickening of the pace of the buffaloes was here noticed, hundreds of which were in sight. At the first whiff of the sulphur vapor borne upon the air, they threw up their heads and tails and began to press forward at a gallop, bellowing and cavorting like they were mad. Waunatoncah plunged straight ahead, taking the direction of the buffaloes. Arriving in the vicinity of the spring, a wondrous sight met their gaze—such a spectacle as was only possible under the conditions and the time. Ahead was a jam of scrounging beasts, head to tail, the bellowings of which was appalling, deep and savage, filling the hearer with a sense of helplessness and dread. Skirting this jam, the party passed through a fringe of cows and smaller kine—staying at the rear from a sense of self-preservation. On the outskirts of these were a number of great elk, stamping and impatient, prone upon the slightest provocation, to make their deadly side thrust at the younger animals. Wolves and other beasts of prey, the constant attendants upon the movements of the buffalo herds, were also numerous, ready to pounce upon some luckless bull retiring, mortally wounded, from an encounter with some other.

Clearing the ruck, Waunatoncah led the way up one hill-side, down into a hollow, and then up another gradual slope. Here they saw being enacted a brute drama, the sight of which has been vouchsafed to but few mortals; and here Great Hatchet halted of his own accord. At their feet lay a basin, open at the west and rimmed around with hills, precipitous on the southeast. From this basin a strong

### In Point of Honor.

odor of sulphuretted hydrogen greeted the nostrils, and the entire space was packed and jammed to its full capacity with a struggling mass of buffaloes, every one of which was striving with might and mein to reach the sulphur springs that oozed up through the soft, miry alluvial soil in the center. The tramping of the myriad of hoofs had changed the springs into mud, black and brackish, reeking with the odor of sulphur. It was this mud that so crazed the sluggish brutes, and into the bog the foremost were mired to their sides, fairly scooping up the salty muck, as those behind, to the furtherest verge of the mass, with a power that was irresistible, were pushing, butting and driving them forward, piling upon one another like a tidal wave, while their intonations were as the dynamics of distant thunder.

The ever changing phases of this brute drama were such as to make the party heedless of self and the dangers of pursuit. But another danger was threatening, and, at the time, much more potent. A sudden jarring of the ground behind them, caused them all to turn. The sight that met their gaze was staggering. Another body of beasts, freshly arrived, were coming up behind with the fury of a cyclone. The rush and roar of the charging mass was appalling. The ground trembled beneath the jar of the heavy brutes. On they came, neither pausing nor swerving at sight of the seven human beings in front of them. Man's vaunted lordship over the brute was not counting here.

Everyone realized that they must clear themselves of this entanglement, or else they would be crushed and ground to pieces. There was only one

## In Point of Honor.

thing to do—take refuge as best they could behind the few scattering trees. Fortunately, the first tree that presented itself was hollow, and Ilma and Betty were placed within. The white men sought shelter close by, while Waunatoncah swung himself into the branches of a tree, motioning to the Wyandot to place himself face forward against the trunk. Head after head of sharp glistening horns shot past, and soon joined the main body, piling upon one-another and crushing the life out of those that were so unfortunate as to be thrown from their feet in the jam.

Pressing close upon the rear of this last body of beasts, was a large elk, fretted and vengeful. At every opportunity he drove his antler into the quarter of some charging buffalo. At last, a bull whom he had plucked, took it into his dull brain to retaliate. Backing himself from the wedged mass, he turned the full length of his shaggy side. Quick as a flash the elk sprang forward, driving his horn into the flank of his would be antagonist. Another quick side thrust, as he was passing, and he searched the bull's vitals, carrying off on his horns a chaplet of viscera. For a few minutes the bull stood dull and staggered, while his life blood poured in a full stream from his lacerated side. Then he gradually sank down, inch by inch his giant muscles giving away.

This tragedy of the forest, over in a twinkling, passed before the eyes of the little party, all remaining motionless until the last throes of death had passed over the bull. Waunatoncah then swung himself from the tree, passed quickly to the bison's

### In Point of Honor.

side and cut from the rump two large pieces of flesh. Handing one piece to Kenton, he took up the other himself, and then once again led the way through the forest, pressing forward toward the precipitous hills on the southeast.

Did you ever think of it? Perhaps had it not been for the buffalo this country would not have been what it is today. When civilization began to press inland from the Atlantic seaboard he trod a path for it with his sharp hoofs. Along that trail he was the purveyor of his own flesh for man, and he furnished abundantly.

## CHAPTER XVI.

AMONG THE ECHOING CRAIGS.

**J**Y sundown Waunatoncah had led the little party under the brows of the precipitous hills to which he had directed their steps —mockers, in their rock-ribbed permanence, of the mutability of man. Ever and anon they had crossed a little brook of translucent waters, suggesting the blended flow of countless dew-drops and sunbeams. The hills—small mountains within themselves—were lofty cliffs of sandstone and had been worn into an astonishing variety of forms by the actions of the water as it melted from the snow and ice of winter and ran down their sides in the spring. Here and there were deep caverns and vast recesses—peopled with strange, unearthly beings by Indian imagination. Waunatoncah led the way as if familiar with the scene and the route.

At length he came to an open, rocky stretch, and presently stopped at the head of a path leading down to, and across, a small canyon an hundred feet or more deep, and from twenty-five to thirty feet wide. Nature, it seemed, had chiseled out of the rock the jagged pass leading down to the little stream that danced upon the bed of the canyon, also a path up the other side. On the left of this rocky pass a bluff arose to a considerable height, overhanging the trail and having at its base a narrow ledge some four or five feet wide. On the right, at

## In Point of Honor.

about an hundred yards, a hazel thicket set in up a gradual slope, a few scattering trees, gnarled and rugged, here and there. Great Hatchet followed the ledge until he came to the bank of the canyon, where the bluff abruptly turned and the ledge widened. Turning this angle, they moved under the brow for a short distance and then preparations were commenced for the night. They were few and simple—some blankets being spread for the ladies and a bed made from the leaves of the shrubbery for the men. By the time these preparations were made and the scanty supper consumed, daylight was rapidly disappearing and the recess in which they were, assuming a dusky hue, changed rapidly into dense shadows that seemed to be drawing an impenetrable veil over the bosom of the world.

"How dense the shadows are!" exclaimed Ilma.

"As deep as the wild regret of days past, or for hopes that must not be," Noll answered her. He had been thinking of her and how her presence effected him. All the winter he had partly realized that his feelings for her were deep—growing as deep as his heart was. Yet what had he to hope for? It could truly be said of him that his soul had been plodding through retrospect for the past year. It seemed to him that he only had the shattered hulk of sad mistakes upon which to build the future. His, was a constant inward struggle, a constant pain of the heart, and the pursuit had giving him a respite from his hopeless thoughts. But now that Ilma was near him again, the same gnawing, hopeless longing, unutterable, and, it seemed to him, unavailable, re-

## In Point of Honor.

curred. For the thousandth time he saw the vision of, what to him, was a wasted past. The hungry maw of inexorable fate was filled with his misfortunes—his mistakes.

"A hope that must not be, is an empty hope," answered Ilma. "An empty hope, instead of satisfying the emptiness of lost desire, but adds fuel to poignant grief." And then after a slight pause, she asked: "But why the remark you made? Another fit of melancholy? Does not this gloom, the pictures of these rugged hills impressed upon the mind, the melody of the swishing, gurgling stream below, impress you with a sense of awe, at the same time blended with pleasure?"

"That is just it; it does impress me—the permanence of nature and the mutability of man. I am not such a pessimist as to credit those who tell us that life, at best, is but little, for to me it is sweet, very sweet, else I would not struggle to live. Yet it does appear that this little span of life is worthless and empty when we compare it with all that is swallowed up in eternity."

"Then the contemplation of life tends to make you sad?"

"No, not sad—I do not know just what you would call it. The changeableness of the life of man, as of everything else bearing life, impresses me with its mystery. Why the devious wanderings of a soul? Why the trepidations, the achievements, the defeats; why the splendor and the gloom?"

"Such questions are for old men——"

"Or for younger ones who have been suddenly torn from the bloom and dew of morning."

## In Point of Honor.

"That reminds me—— Your life must have been sad, and the trials hard to bear, before coming among us. You must know that I would like to hear your story—will you tell it to me some time?"

"Yes, at the first opportunity. I am afraid, however, that it will not show me in the light in which I should wish to appear in your eyes. It is the story of a great mistake."

"I am not one to credit a mistake, where the purpose or intention was good, and the man's life has been profited by it."

"Do you mean that?"

"Yes."

"And do you in any way realize what hope your words kindle in my heart?"

"There can be no hope in your heart but what finds echo in mine."

To Noll, her voice had a marvelous melody to it; a something that thrilled the soul—suggesting a theme of passionate things—a dream as yet undreamed.

Kenton here joined the party, coming from out the gloom with an armful of brush-wood, which he heaped upon the fire, making it crackle and sputter into brighter flames.

"Look here, people," he admonished, "we must get as much sleep as possible, for at moonrise we must travel, and that fast, if we would escape those red varmints."

"Will they attempt to follow us over such a trail?" asked Noll, incredulously.

"Follow us!" the hunter exclaimed. "An Ameri-

## In Point of Honor.

can Indian would chase you to the brink of Hades, and then set up a derisive, mocking laugh if you dodged him there and let him slip over in your stead."

Without waiting for any further remark, Kenton stretched himself upon the bed of leaves. The others soon sought their rest, and presently, all but Waunatoncah were fast asleep. The Indian, seeing that all were lost in slumber, silently arose, and making his way along the ledge, was soon at the head of the little pass that led across the canyon. Here he took up a position, assuming a vigilance that denoted that he was apprehensive of the approach of the Wyandots at any moment. For six hours he patiently sat, until the moon came out. Then it was that his vigilance was awarded——

A naked figure stepped out into the moonlight from the shrubbery that fringed the stretch of rock. It was followed by a double; then another and another until sixteen swarthy forms loomed up against the orb of night. Last, and bringing up the rear, was Captain William Sussex.

By one of those strange turns of the hand of fate, just as Sussex stepped out upon the rock, Kenton arose and put some fresh wood upon the fire. The smoke shot upward to the summit of the bluff, was caught by the passing wind and wafted to the nostrils of the Wyandots. Quick as thought each and every one of them was prostrate upon the rock, worming his way back into the bush. Waunatoncah seeing this, and divining that something had revealed their presence to the enemy, sat irresolute for a minute. Then, noticing that Sussex was yet

## In Point of Honor.

standing, he raised his rifle, took a quick, uncertain aim and fired. Sussex uttered an exclamation of pain, swayed and tottered for a moment, when a swarthy form shot forward and supported him back from whence he had appeared.

The crack of the rifle, breaking upon the narrow bounds of the cliffs, was heard undulating up the caverns in distant and dying cadences—a signal, wherein the sleepers aroused from their slumber by its echoes, knew that they were soon to battle against death. Leaving the two girls in the shelter of the bluffs, Kenton led the way out and joined the Sagamore.

“What is it?” he asked in a guarded tone.

“Wyandots,” the chief cautiously answered.

“But why the shot?”

“They know we are here and I wanted to make their number less.”

“Did you succeed?”

“There is one who will not fight with the rest.”

“Where are they?”

A flight of arrows, rattling upon the rocks, answered the question. The arrows were followed by a few desultory shots from rifles.

“To cover!” commanded Kenton, setting the example by secreting himself in a crevice of the rocks. Each one placed himself in a fissure so as to command a view of all approaches, while their own persons were effectually concealed from the observation of any prying eye. A long and anxious watch then followed, but without any evidence of attack. Noll began to hope that the enemy had abandoned the pursuit, but upon venturing to give expression

## In Point of Honor.

to his impression, he was met by an incredulous shake from Kenton's head.

"An Indian is very much like a dreaded disease," he said—"he is often not seen at all, but felt."

With the coming of dawn the Wyandots showed signs of life. The first indication of them called forth an expressive "hugh!" from Waunatoncah, as they came dodging from one rock to another, and from bush to bush.

"I see 'em, Hatchet, I see 'em," said Kenton. "Let 'em come. Make sure of your aim, boys. See that painted devil dart in behind that rock—take him, Noll. Silas, you take the dingy scamp peering out behind that log. Waunatoncah, watch the approach on the right there—look out—they are gathering for the rush—better give it to 'em now, it will check their movement and give us time to reload."

The rifles rang out almost in unison, and then each fell to reloading as rapidly possible. Two of the Wyandots were badly hit, and the others bounded back to a safer distance.

"I thought it would check their progress," exclaimed Kenton, as he noted the effect of the shots. "Didn't expect to hurt 'em much, but thought that maybe we might wing 'em, or bark 'em. Your barked animal is more timorous and skittish," he further said, dexterously wrapping a square patch of cloth around his bullet and ramming it home. After adjusting the flint, and seeing that the priming was in good order, he added: "Now let 'em come! I've got a load in here that will bring down anything at a hundred yards, even if it were the devil himself."

As though in answer to his words a yell arose on

## In Point of Honor.

the air as wild, as intense, and as savage as the revengeful natures of their enemies could conceive. The craigs reverberated the horrid yells, and for a moment it seemed as if the imps with which the Indian imagination peopled the caverns had possessed themselves of the air and were exulting over the fall of some hapless human soul. These yells had been called forth from the Wyandots by the return of their hit fellows. It seemed that only a few had made the first hazard.

"Blate, you red devils! Awaken the caverns with echoes! If one of you but show your painted carcass within the line of the hazel-brush, these rocks will re-echo with your death-screech!" Kenton said, sweeping the thickets with eagle eye for another foe.

"The Wyandots are like a flock of ravens upon the approach of an eagle—they are all fuss and no fight," scoffed the Sachem, in soft, gutteral tones.

It was near noon before another move was made by the Wyandots. Glimpes could be caught of them as they came darting from bush to rock and from rock to bush. They were taking up a position so as to form a continuous line stretching for an hundred yards to the right and left. The situation was now indeed becoming grave, for it looked as if the whole band of savages were about to charge at once. There was nothing to do but to sell their lives as dearly as possible, and this they resolved to do. Quickly maturing their plans, they commenced a vigorous fire from the front. The warriors availed themselves of the rocks and bushes, yet, in passing, they must be exposed for a moment, and a moment's

## In Point of Honor.

exposure was enough for the unerring bullets of John Kenton and Silas Wilkins to find lodgment in their swarthy forms. So sure and certain were the shots, though at too great a distance to be fatal, that the Wyandots grew very cautious as they advanced, all halting just before reaching the edge of the thicket.

"It's a good hundred yards to the brush, boys," said Kenton, "and if we are careful we may yet save the day. Each one prepare his bullet and pour out a charger of powder, so that it will be handy. Save your fire until the devils rise to rush on us, then let 'em have it. That will give us time to reload."

An anxious moment then followed, but the Wyandots showed no further signs of a rush.

"They are waiting for a signal," said Wilkins, and almost accompanying his words a low murmur was heard passing from one Wyandot to another.

"There—there it is—be ready, boys," cautioned Kenton.

"Hugh!" exclaimed Waunatoncah, for instead of the rush as was expected, it was noted that the warriors were rapidly retreating back to covert.

"What's the matter, now?" asked Noll.

"Scared, perhaps," answered Kenton.

"Don't know how many there are in this ambushment, maybe," commented Wilkins.

The release from their tension was only short-lived, however, for they soon discovered the cause of the withdrawal. The foe was preparing to attack them on the flank, which could be most successfully done by reaching the farther side of the canyon. A large isolated rock was on that side, just where the

## In Point of Honor.

pass and canyon intersected. Once behind this rock, the Wyandots could bring the little party under direct fire, at the same time exposing the position of the two girls, and placing them at the mercy of the now infuriated demons. Each one saw the hopelessness of the situation. A shudder passed over each frame at the impending fate; a shadow of fear echoed in each eye. Yet, such is human nature, that even with such an awful doom hanging over them they remained as calm and as calculating as the strongest desire of life could produce.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE BIRD OF FREEDOM.

**E**

TALL, powerful warrior stepped from the covert out into the open, some thirty-five feet from the brink of the cavern.

He was all of one hundred and twenty-five yards from the head of the pass—too far for a successful shot, being down the chasm some distance from the indicated rock.

"Does that dare-devil really intend to leap that chasm?" asked Noll.

"Yes, and he'll do it to, unless Providence intervenes," answered Kenton.

The Wyandot stepped to the brink, measured the distance across with his eye, then walked back far enough to make the dash before attempting the awful leap.

"The calculating imp!" grimly exclaimed Kenton, as he raised his rifle. Although the distance was great and the chances slim, yet he resolved to fire. Once, twice he raised and lowered the piece before touching the trigger—but instead of striking fire the flint broke into many parts. With the utmost composure he proceeded to adjust another, although he knew the Indian would be off before he succeeded.

The Wyandot gathered every muscle for the start. A few quick, short steps, then the dash, and the body bounded into the air with the suppleness of a panther. He fell short of the shelf, however, but

## In Point of Honor.

his hand, reaching out, grasped a shrub on the verge of the chasm, and here he clung with the agility of a squirrel. Without exhausting himself in fruitless efforts, the wily savage let his body drop down almost to the length of his arms. In this position his feet, searching about, found a fragment upon which to rest. After breathing, he summoned all his powers in the attempt to reach the top. He so far succeeded as to draw one knee upon the edge. Seeing his success, his companions made the chasms fairly ring with their exultant and derisive taunts.

This was too much for Waunatoncah. Leaping from his hiding place in full view upon the rocks, he sent back the intimidating yells once, twice, thrice with the fierce war cry of the Massawomekes. Noll, Kenton and Wilkins were in the act of following his example, and making a dash for their foe, when the whip-like crack of a rifle arrested them——

The body of the Wyandot dropped forward; his knee slipped from the position which it had gained. A short, fitful struggle to regain it, and then the form of the savage was seen to be gradually giving way—slipping back. Turning a relentless look at Waunatoncah, the Wyandot shook a hand in grim defiance. Alternately he looked from friend to foe. For one moment the anguish of cold despair could be traced upon his swarthy lineaments, then he shot with swift velocity into his abysmal grave. Some unknown hand had fired the shot, and it seemed that an hundred voices took up the death cry.

The warrior, evidently, was a prominent one and a leader, for each one of his companions rushed forward to the edge of the brink and looked over in

## In Point of Honor.

awed silence for a moment. Then a single bestial yell, more like the blended grief and unrestrained anger of some wild thing, floated upon the air. Grimly the warriors walked back to the edge of the covert, casting low, sullen glances at the place where Waunatoncah had stood.

"We'll have to plug the last living varlet of 'em now, before we can get out of this scrape," commented Wilkins.

"If they don't plug us first," was Kenton's rejoinder.

"Is another one of them going to risk his life in such an attempt!" exclaimed Noll, as he saw another warrior hand over his gun, divest himself of all accoutrements, and step forth for the trial.

Some moments now flew by with the swiftness of thought. Both friend and foe stood in breathless silence watching the movements of the second Wyandot. He also measured the distance with his eye before the run. Suddenly, he crouched like a beast of prey and sprang forward. He had perhaps made a dozen bounds when a woman stepped into view at the square turning of the ledge, an upraised rifle in her hands. She was excited, no doubt, for the rifle was shaking like an aspen leaf, but the surrounding rocks, themselves, were not more steady than the piece became for the single instant it poured forth its fatal contents. The savage shot forward to the edge of the brink, then his body, gathering itself like a ball, sped downward after its predecessor. For one single instant his painted figure was seen splitting the air, head downward, in its rapid flight to destruction.....Betty Wilkins had stepped

## In Point of Honor.

upon the scene of action with a rifle of the finest workmanship, all inlaid with silver and pearl. A wild burst from the lips of Great Hatchet and his white friends greeted her appearance.

This caused consternation among the Wyandots, and brave as they unquestionably were, there was no one else among them willing to attempt that which had cost the others so dearly. Feeling that they had no ordinary foe to combat among those echoing craigs the savages withdrew a short distance up the slope to consult upon, and devise a new method of attack. They stopped in full view, close to a ragged tree that had grown upon the very edge of the chasm, its trunk inclining outward so much that the larger limbs overhung the center of the gorge. Seeing them stop thus, Waunatoncah leaped upon the rocks and, shaking his rifle at them, he shouted:

"The Wyandots are dogs! Their men are women! Their bodies will lie rotting about the rocks and in the caverns for food for the buzzards!"

His taunt was answered by a volley from the rifles of the foe as if they would pour out their impotent fury upon the insensible air.

The respite which followed came most opportune for the besieged. They had been watching and fighting hour after hour with neither food nor drink. Taking advantage of this opportunity, each one went down to the little stream, drank all he wanted, and then filled his bottle. After this, all joined the two girls on the ledge and a luncheon was partaken of buffalo steak and parched corn.

"How long will this last?" asked Noll, who had

## In Point of Honor.

yet to learn of the full methods of Indian warfare.

"Until the last lopin' devil yonder is killed, or hurt, or until they master our scalps," answered Wilkins.

"It seems to me that they should have enough of it—two of their number killed and—how many are there that are wounded?"

"Three," answered the Sachem, "two Indians and the pale-face chief."

"Then it was Sussex at whom you shot this morning?"

"Yes, he now lies in the bushes."

Some time was here occupied with the captured Wyandot. The fetters which bound his arms and legs were unloosed, and he was allowed to stretch his stiffened sinews. Some parched corn and broiled meat was placed before him, also some water. Of the water he drank greedily, but proceeded with calm indifference to partake of the food.

"Hurry up, Wyandot, hurry up!" impatiently commanded Kenton. "It's no telling when those imps yonder may return, and we cannot leave those hands and legs of yours free while attending to them;" whereupon, the Indian quickened his movements and ate a hearty meal.

Kenton had just finished retying the captive when the expressive "hugh!" from Great Hatchet called for his attention. Quickly facing toward the Wyandots, he saw one of their number slowly climbing the ragged tree previously spoken of. Reaching a large limb that stretched out over the chasm, and inclining a little to the left, the savage made his way cautiously until he had reached far out upon the

## In Point of Honor.

branch. Above him was the blue vaults of heaven; below, was an abysmal depth an hundred feet. Breathlessly the whites stood watching him. This feat, itself, was so daring that they hardly allowed themselves to breath, forgetting for the moment their own position in the awful speculation—if he were to lose his wits and fall. Gaining the desired point, the Indian daringly perched himself upon the limb and commenced unwinding from around his waist a rawhide rope that had been made by tying the prisoner's strings together he had secured from each of his fellows. In one end was a loop, which he let drop down; the other he securely tied to the limb upon which he was sitting. Doing this, he swung his body across the limb, let himself drop down almost to the full length of his arms, the rope coming between his legs. Then he commenced letting himself down.

"God in heaven!" breathed Noll in awe, "that is certainly a prodigy of cool, calculating rashness."

"The human that can do that certainly takes hold of life as by a thread," answered Silas.

"Yes, if I was just nigh enough, I would snip the thread and let him drop into his grave," followed from Kenton, as he opened and shut the pan of his rifle with a hand that trembled in a manner that would have denoted its utter inability to carry out such a task.

Forming a beautiful background to this scene, and one calculated to add more impressively to the mind, were masses of steel-white clouds, rolling and toppling in terrific, yet grand, disorder, with sun-kissed edges. A flock of wild pigeons, passing,

## In Point of Honor.

shown like black moving specks against the rolling canvass.

The savage carefully placed his foot within the loop. For a moment he remained passive, the currents of air gently swaying his body to and fro. Then he commenced to "pump" so as to acquire a swing back and forth across the chasm. Patiently and industriously he labored, each effort increasing the pendulum-like sweep of his body. The length of the rope was so judged as to allow the loop to pass just over each bank.

"The fool is oscillating between the open jaws of death," said Noll. "Suppose that rope breaks?"

"Yes, but it won't break; it's made of raw-hide," Wilkins answered him.

The clouds, as if tired of their terrific gambol, were breaking assunder; hovering around the distant peaks like broken flocks of birds going to their roost. An eagle screamed, as he mounted from his eyry to soar aloft in the heavens. Screaming and wheeling he mounted for a moment, and then, as if impelled by some sudden impulse, he poised upon his fluttering pinions almost directly over the swinging Indian.

"An eagle!" said the Sagamore.

"The bird of freedom!" breathed Ilma.

"An omen!" answered Betty.

"Liberty!" faltered Kenton.

"Or death!" echoed Noll.

The incidents of the next few minutes passed in such rapid succession that it is hard to relate them in their proper order, and with accuracy, so just a

## In Point of Honor.

sketch will be made, leaving most of the details to be filled in by the reader. First, following Noll's words, was a rattling volley of musketry. The Wyandots gathered upon the slope were seen to stagger, some pitching headlong, others bounding off, while yet others, dropping to the ground, commenced dragging themselves to the friendly cover. The savage clinging to the rope, loosened his hold, threw up both hands, his body describing a half-circle in its downward movement. His foot, however, slipped through the loop, and, instead of being hurled into the depths below, was thus supported. The momentum, which he had acquired, swung his body with awful force, and his head went crashing once, twice, against the walls of the chasm.

Accompanying, rather than following, the volley of musketry, was a lusty shout from American throats, and some thirty men were seen leaping from behind the rocks and shrubbery on the opposite side of the canyon, Colonel Cecil Fairfax in their midst. The scene that followed can better be imagined than described.

"Father, your appearance was most timely."

"Daughter, I always try to be prompt in my obligations," answered the Colonel, tears of gladness springing to his eyes, as he folded Ilma in his arms. "Ah, boys, a trail is most treacherous in the mountains. A little more delay, and we would have been too late."

"We would have held them in check for some time, sir."

"I'd bank on you, Kenton, you and the three

## In Point of Honor.

companions you have had with you."

"We would have disputed a good while, sir, as to which party of us was the most deserving to die," said Wilkins, "although it did look slim for us when that Indian was so near stepping upon yonder side."

"I'll warrant the truth of that statement," replied the Colonel, turning to look at the body of the Wyandot yet swinging back and forth over the chasm.

"Shall we leave the body there?" asked Wilkins.

"We are Christian gentlemen, sir, and bury the dead," was the reply.

"It will be a hazardous undertaking to rescue that carcass," ventured Kenton.

Just then one of the men who had accompanied the Colonel stepped out in view upon the slope. He surveyed the swinging body for a while, then deliberately raised his rifle. Although there was a general movement on the part of those around the Colonel as if they would check him, he fired. The tension of the raw-hide, made by the weight of the Indian's body, was such as to cause the bullet to act like a sharp knife; the line parted and the Wyandot dropped like lead into the abyss below.

"'Twas inhuman," hotly exclaimed the Colonel, starting forward. He just as suddenly checked himself, however, for he caught sight of a number of men bringing the wounded Sussex out from where his Indian friends had placed him. They were followed by Waunatoncah, a disappointment which he was nobly trying to conceal, manifest upon his features.

"Here, sir," spoke up one of the bearers, "is the murderin' white devil you told us about. He has

## In Point of Honor.

had his leg broken by a bullet and now has fever. He was raving like a maniac when we found him."

"Father, the man is mad. It is not the fever that makes him so, but his sins."

"Lay him upon that smooth rock there—not upon the naked rock, boys—spread a blanket for him," commanded the Colonel. "I cannot strike a demented man, and sick at that."

Just then the attention was again attracted by the return of some men who had gone in behind the ledge, the captured Wyandot in their midst.

"What have we here?" the Colonel asked in amazement.

Noll told him, explaining when and how they had captured the red-skin. After this the Colonel walked back and forth several times in deep study, pausing once or twice to cast a troubled look upon Sussex. The company stood respectfully awaiting his pleasure to speak; it being his right to say what should be done with the Englishman—and the Massawomeke's.

"What say you, Waunatoncah?" he finally asked in a husky voice—the full force of all the hours of anguish this man had caused him returning.

"The heart of Great Hatchet is very heavy," replied the chief. "The Great Spirit has turned His face from the chief of the Massawomekes."

Colonel Fairfax looked puzzled and turned an inquiring face to Kenton.

"He means that you may do with him as you like, sir. The hand of an Indian never strikes an idiot, knowingly."

"What would you council then, Kenton?"

## In Point of Honor.

"Leave him here upon the rocks. Set the Wyandot free and he will take care of him. In fact, it is a part of a red-skin's religion to deal tenderly with those whom the Master of life has so afflicted."

"Water!" feebly implored Sussex, wetting his parched lips with his tongue.

"Yes, I'll give you water," said Kenton, unslinging his leather canteen, "though the Lord knows that a month ago I would have preferred handing you a cup of gall. Such is the way of man, however. Many has been the time that I have eagerly sought the life of some creature and then bitterly regretted it after the bullet had found its vitals. I feel sorry for you, Englishman, though by all the laws known to man you ought to be shot..... Does that plan suit you, Colonel?"

"I can think of none better."

"Shall Great Hatchet make known your wishes to the Wyandot?"

"Yes."

"You have heard what has passed, Great Hatchet, and know what the white father wishes. Speak to the red varlet here in his own tongue and tell him that the pale-face knows that a Wyandot laughs at the tortures of the stake—tell him that it is not their custom to practice torture anyway. Tell him that we want him to take the pale-face chief back with him and there keep him until he dies."

With gloomy dignity Waunatoncah turned toward the released captive. A frightful gleam of ferocity shot across the swarthy lineaments of the Wyandot as the chief did this, but he quickly subdued it upon the first words that were uttered to him. Trans-

### In Point of Honor.

lated, Waunatoncah's words were as follows:

"Look at me, Wyandot, and then go home and tell your women that you have seen a chief. The blood of many chiefs runs in my veins. Chief of the Massawomekes, fiercest tribe of all nations. I have seen my fathers fall like leaves before the guns of the pale-face, and I have gathered their bones on the hunting grounds of the Indian. Show me the nation with whom my people have not fought. Yet has the Great Spirit turned his face from the greatest of all chiefs."

A multitude of fierce passions were struggling on the tawny countenance of the Wyandot, as though he would dispute the other's claim to being the greatest of all chiefs, subsiding, however, as Wau-natoncah, in the characteristic language of the Indian, began to delineate the story of his wrong. The Wyandot assumed a grave and dignified attention as he listened. In closing, Great Hatchet said:

"The Great Spirit made the Indian and the pale-face. He gave them the breath of life. A warrior can never die. The Master of life does not reach forth His hand to take that He has given. When He wants one of them He calls them and they go. His breath is the spirit of life, and the being whom He has breathed upon lives forever. Upon some He places a deep sleep when He wants them; they are dead. Others, He only takes their spirit, leaving their mouths full of empty and foolish words. An Indian dare not strike such an one, for the released spirit might be close by and would bear the message of the cowardly act to the ears of the Great Spirit. The Indian would be shut out from the blessed

### In Point of Honor.

grounds of his people. Listen! Wyandot, my white haired father says you must take the pale-face chief back to your people and there feed him until the Great Spirit wants his body. I have spoken. I turn my face toward the wigwams of my people."

The Massawomeke turned and waived his hand in a mute adieu to his white friends, a mighty emotion being expressed in the action. Without a word of parting he faced toward the north—toward the land of his people. A hand bearing the weight of ages was pressing heavy upon his spirit—superstition. The company watched him until he was lost to view in the shrubbery, then they also took up the trail for home. Arriving upon the farther side of the canyon, they all turned and cast a last look upon the scene they had just quitted. Sussex was yet stretched out upon the blanket—wounded in body and mind. His red partisan, looking the very emblem of death, was standing where they had left him.

No crime deserves eternal punishment. Eternal punishment would be the greatest of all crimes. Sin chastens no less than sorrow.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE SUPREME MOMENT.

**T**It was a day in June. The heat quivered up from the river and in the open. The odor of flowers hung heavily upon the air, seeming in a way to obstruct its free passage into the nostrils. The leaves had drooped upon their stems and the birds had sought the cool, shady nooks down by the river. A pleasant somnolence embraced the lazy world.

Slowly winding its way up the graveled driveway to Fairfax Hall was a bedraggled party, tired and footsore. Under the great arches of the trees the heat lay still. Not a sign of life could be seen anywhere. Even the old house with its wide piazzas, espaliered by rows of boxwood, and overhung by great drooping branches, took on the langorous quiet. Suddenly from out the cavernous shade of the porch fluttered an old lady. She was followed by a group of turbaned heads, grinning with ebullient joy. The party quickened its pace, and the lady fairly sped over the ground, meeting the party long before it had reached the inner gate. One after the other she folded several members in her arms, almost smothering them with kisses. Then there followed a perfect chatter of voices—amid tears of joy.

“Home!” said the Colonel, with a long-drawn, grateful sigh.

## In Point of Honor.

"The sweetest word that ever was uttered," returned his daughter.

"I had begun to think that it would never be the same home to me again, or at least that it would lose its sweeter meaning," answered Mrs. Fairfax.

"Even so, Madam," returned her husband, handing her through the doorway with a tender smile.

As was but natural, the next two hours at Fairfax Hall were filled with an infectious unrest. The negro servants scurried hither and thither with important air. Gradually the great hall of the mansion was filled with the buzz of many voices, each pausing upon meeting another to impart some item that had been gleaned from the conversation of their masters. Soon the great dining room—only such a dining room as was possible in colonial days—was filled, and the buzz of voices was augmented by the rattle of dishes.

Some time after, Colonel Fairfax and Noll, emerging from different entrances, met upon the porch.

"A refreshing bath, a change to clean linen, and a good wholesome meal has a tendency to rest one vastly, Mr. Noll."

"It does that, sir."

Lady Fairfax joined them.

"We are thirsting for the news of the land, Madam," said the Colonel as he conducted her to a spacious arm chair.

"A messenger passed this forenoon and told of the taking of Ticonderoga and Crown Point by——"

"Taking of Ticonderoga—there has been fighting!"

"Why yes; havn't you heard?"

"Heard—Madam, we have been in the wilderness

## In Point of Honor.

for over forty days, and could not possibly have heard anything!"

"That's so—you have not even heard of the first battle, have you?"

"We have heard absolutely nothing."

"Over a month ago at a little place called Lexington the British were almost cut to pieces, only a few of the Americans being killed. The result has fired the whole country and fully twenty thousand men have gathered around Boston. The common talk is to run Gage and the British into the sea."

"Hear that, sir! Gads, I told you there would be no peaceable adjustment—— Proceed, Madam."

"Generals Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne have joined Gage, bringing with them powerful re-inforcements. A thing that has caused much derision is a proclamation just recently issued by Gage declaring all those under arms as rebels and traitors to the King, and offering to pardon those who would submit—Samuel Adams and John Hancock excepted."

"What, Sam Adams and John Hancock excepted!"

"Yes, they are to suffer the penalty of treason."

"The foppish, arrogant fool! There is always a catching before a hanging!"

Noll sat looking out across the grove—at nothing. He had heard every word although at times seemingly unconscious. A choking sensation had possession of him. He felt that the supreme moment was near at hand. He had pitted judgment against hope and judgment had won. Soon he would be called upon to give practical expression to the statements he had made in the presence of George Washington and Patrick Henry. But at the time he had

## In Point of Honor.

made them, had he allowed himself to be confronted with all his words might mean in case of actual test? Could he banish the traditions of his race; the love of his native land; the——

A vision of loveliness floated from out the doorway. The swirl of her silk was like the mythical music of angels' wings. To Noll, the vision was like a dream of delight bursting upon dark ponderings.

"Sir," cried the vision, advancing toward Noll—"Ah, I forget!" making a sweeping bow to her parents: "Father, mother, allow me to assume the honor of presenting to you, Sir Arthur Howard Noll, peer of any in England, being next to blood-royal, Earl of Lonsdale, and belted and knighted by the King, himself. Now sir, I beg a continuance of that story which was interrupted on last evening."

Without waiting for an assent she placed a hand upon his arm and gently shoved him down the massive stone steps in the direction of a summer house overlooking some broad terraces to the left of the Hall, casting a bewitching smile over her shoulder at her parents as they left the mansion.

"Let me see—I believe you had arrived at that period in your life leading up to the terrible tragedy referred to in Lady Bolinbroke's letter?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"It must have taken an iron will to have withstood the effects of such a tragedy."

"You shall hear the story and judge for yourself."

"I am listening," she answered, as she adjusted herself to a comfortably position upon a rustic seat.

"As you perhaps know," he began, "in fact as

### In Point of Honor.

every subject under the British crown knows, the Duke of Cumberland, William Augustus, is a wayward, worthless, yet dashing, devil-may-care young man that finds his pleasure in riotous living—in being a ‘good fellow’ among good fellows, rather than as a ceremonious and perhaps lascivious prince among the courtiers and ladies of the court. He greatly affects the hazards and excitement of the cards and dice, together with the free, wild life of the gambler and spends most of his time in low lodges with unprincely retainers to the neglect of his puissant brother’s expressed wishes and commands. He is hot-headed, unruly, lacking in point of honor and greatly overbearing. Naturally he has a great many enemies, many of whom are constantly seeking his ruin or disfavor with the King. It is with one of these attempts that I have to deal and, looking back, I can see now how unnecessary was my sacrifice.

“As you are aware, England and France are ever at loggerheads; each is constantly watching the other, and the result is that diplomatic relations are ever at a strain. Therefore when Bourgogne succeeded Valincour as ambassador to England, there were those who feared a coup-d’e-tat on the part of the French King—Bourgogne being accounted the leading diplomat in French circles.

“Now there arrived in London almost simultaneously with Bourgogne a woman of great beauty and elegant carriage. She became associated with the French legation, and set all London wild with her beauty. I was away at the time of her coming on business connected with one of my father’s estates in Scotland; a business that detained me for some

## In Point of Honor.

time. In the meantime Mademoiselle Avice Noailles, as was her name, had established a little court all her own and among her most constant attendants was the Duke of Cumberland. When I arrived in London his attentions to the lady were so marked as to cause grave apprehension at court. You see, Mademoiselle was not the woman whom the King would choose for his wayward brother, even if she was beautiful.

"When it became known that Bourgogne was assiduously, though secretly, working to bring about a union of the two, the apprehension became grave indeed, and the King was at his wits-end to devise a means to thwart it. The Duke brought about the desired result himself. Although unscrupulous, yet he is brave and dogged when aroused. He fancied some slight on the part of Mademoiselle, consequently a breach was made between them. Naturally the King worked hard to widen the breach while Bourgogne worked equally as hard to bring about a reconciliation. The King won, however, finally intrusting the Duke with a diplomatic service to the court of Spain.

"This move on the part of the King was met by an open and angry remonstrance on the part of Bourgogne. He declared that one of the first ladies of France had been insulted and shamefully mistreated by the House of Hanover. The French King threatened to sever diplomatic relations unless suitable reparations were made in the way of apology or otherwise. You will easily see that laboring under strained relations, made more tense by this little episode—though only a pretext on the part of

### In Point of Honor.

Bourgogne; the two countries might easily have been precipitated into war. Owing to the turbulent state of her colonies such a condition would have proven most disastrous to England. Therefore the King began groping about for some means to palliate the evil. Unfortunately for me, I was the one upon whom his hand fell.

"Now I must tell you that I had met Mademoiselle many times at court receptions and different functions at which we both participated. I'll admit that I was fascinated with her brilliance, her beauty, and her wit, yet at times I could not help but have a feeling of mistrust of her. I suspected her motive —being a protege of Bourgogne. In spite of the mask of self-control she so well assumed she could not conceal the intensity of passion in her glances when I would suggest that a bright, shrewd and beautiful woman, with proper marraige, might rule or ruin the House of Hanover. Hearing that I stood next in favor to the Duke, the King sent for me.

"To make short shift; the King beseeched me to throw myself into the breach and, if possible, marry Mademoiselle before his brother could return. It was a cold-blooded, selfish proposition and I at first refused. He dismissed me in a fit of rage, but sent for me the next day. He was now augmented by the wily tongued Pitts. They reasoned with me for several days and finally gained my consent by appealing to my patriotism. They told me that the House of Hanover was in jeopardy and that England was likely to suffer unless something was done. I lacked the judgment and discretion of age; the hot blood of youth was flowing through my veins; I

## In Point of Honor.

mistook sentiment for patriotism; I consented.

"Everything was propitious for me to succeed. Bourgogne made no objections and Mademoiselle, fearing that she had lost the Duke, was ready to accept the next best chance. The ceremony was performed by the rites of the church of England at Calias, France.

"Two years passed, and she seemed content. A child came—a boy. The love I bore that boy increased the respect I bore for Mademoiselle. Bourgogne was recalled to France and the evil influence which had surrounded her was taken away. 'Tis true that she did not love me, but my kindness gained her respect and appreciation. At times she was sad, very sad, but she never confided in me the cause—I was to learn of it in a way that was far more different and startling than anything of which I had ever heard or dreamed.

"One day—two years later—the servant brought up a card upon which was written, 'Comte de Berri.' I was in the presence of Mademoiselle at the time, and caught the flush of her face as she hurriedly and tremblingly left the room. The next day the Comte came again, and the next. The third day, upon entering my room, I noticed a letter conspicuously placed where it would attract my attention. Mademoiselle Avice had left me for the Comte de Berri—the letter told the whole story.

"Some years prior to her meeting with me, her parents had died, leaving her a comfortable, but small fortune. The Comte had met her and married her. He loved a free, wild life with plenty of money to gratify his desires—and she loved him. In

## In Point of Honor.

two years the money was gone and want was staring them in the face. Her friends—so the Comte told her—approached him and told him that if he would desert her she would be well cared for. He loved her, but he was weak; he yielded, and for three years he had been a prey to remorse for his cowardly act.

"She became desperate, and making her way to London, she solicited the aid of Bourgogne, who had been her father's friend. Seeing her wonderful beauty, he conceived the daring idea of an effort to ensnare the heart of a prince in the House of Hanover and marr his life. You know the result—she married me. Two years passed and the Comte hearing where she was, had come, pleading his weakness and begging her forgiveness. She loved him and that was the sequel to why she had gone.

"As you must know, Miss Ilma, I was staggered at the enormity of the offense which had been perpetrated against me for a time, and then the thought of the child flashed through my mind, and his illegitimate birth maddened me. I knew where he likely was—father or mother one had him—and I madly dashed out to find them and tell of the stigma upon his name. As I brusquely flung open my mother's room door, the little fellow stopped cooing to her and turned to me with a radiant smile, holding out his little fat chubby hands. Ilma, I was nearer being a man then than I have ever been before or since. I told my mother, but not in the words I had intended. I shall never forget her answer: 'That is alright, Howard,' she said; 'it is the man himself at whom the world looks, not his parents who have

## In Point of Honor.

gone before him.' Illicit though he was, yet I vowed then and there that my boy should take his place among men, without tarnish, or I would battle the whole world.

"Two more years passed, during which time I was called on duty to India. I had only been there a few months, however, when I received a message from England that mother was rapidly failing in health and for me to return. I arrived in London just in time to be of service to the queen, but my mother was dead. In the meantime the Comte de Berri had gambled away and squandered what money Mademoiselle had and what I had settled upon her—which he made certain to take with them—and had once more deserted her. Cheated of life's fullest measure, fleeced, ruined, sick-at-heart, and desperate, she made her way back to England, crossing the channel the same day I arrived in London. Her mother's love had asserted itself—perhaps her nature demanded that she should have something upon which to place her affections—she had come to get possession of the child.

"That night I dismissed the nurse, telling her that I would put the boy to bed—intending to have a little romp with him before slumber closed his eyes. We had been playing for some time, when the door swung noiselessly open and Mademoiselle stealthily and silently entered. She started upon seeing me, and nearly swooned, while to me her appearance was like an apparition. With a wistful, hungry, yet frightened look, she fixed her gaze upon the boy, and finally asked if she might kiss him. Without waiting for me to speak she approached the bed

## In Point of Honor.

while I stood as if paralyzed during the action. I was brought to my senses by the sound of her low passionate voice. She was recounting to me the story of her husband's second ruthless desertion of her, and ended by telling me that she had returned for the boy—claiming she could not live without him.

"‘Yes, but you have no right to him,’ I said.

“‘A mother’s claim should always be prior to the father’s.’

“‘Not where the mother has been so heartless and unworthy,’ I returned.

A wild, hunted look crept into her eyes. She breathed heavily; she fumbled at the lace around her throat; evidently she had not expected serious opposition.

“‘I heard that you were in India,’ she said, ‘I did not think to find you here.’

“I saw her plan; ‘then you intended to steal the boy, did you?’

“‘Yes—but will you give him to me—I must have him! Think of his birth.’

“I told her no; she remonstrated; but I was firm. Some minutes then passed in parley. At times she was penitent and beseeching; at others vehement and angry. Thrice, several times I tried to reason with her, but it made her the more desperate. Finally, thinking to compromise, I suggested that she take furnished rooms in the city, I making an allowance for her maintainance. She should have the privilege of seeing the boy from three to four times a week if she so desired. The proposition maddened her; her face turned livid; she fairly hissed her

## In Point of Honor.

refusal in my face. A settled, determined calm followed her outburst.

"Tell me," she said, "answer me yes or no—do you ever intend to let me have the boy?" her words were intense, while her bosom rose and fell with the might of her emotion.

"No," I answered.

"Then if I cannot have him, you shall not!"

"Before I even had a conception of her intentions, much less had time to thwart her, she stooped over the child and grasping him by his little feet, with a ruthless hand she dashed his head against the heavy bed-post. I sprang toward her, grasping her arm in a vice-like grip, just as she flung the body upon the bed. Roughly I shoved her from me, turning to gather up the quivering, lifeless remains of my boy. I must have shoved her with awful force, for in falling, her head struck the divan; her neck was broken.

"The vigil of that night was enough to, and did almost drive me mad. I called no one—I was too much dazed. As you know, Lady Bolinbroke says they found me there the next day. You can surmise the rest. I was imprisoned. My friends tried to see me, but their efforts were unavailing—my enemies were powerful. Finally my father succeeded in bribing the goaler to allow me to escape. I was for fighting it out, but owing to the condition of the King, father persuaded me to flee. We did; but were overtaken, the servants routed, and my father killed. No light, no hope for me then—no respite for my wearied soul. A mock court-martial was ordered to sit in judgment upon my actions—I am now an exile from my native land."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE PARDON THAT CAME TOO LATE.

**J**UST above the trees was the sun. The cool of the after-glow we call the dusk was taking the place of the heat of the day. Colonel Fairfax walked out to the front gate to await the postman, who was coming up the graveled driveway. In his hand was a huge pipe, the stem of which was in his mouth. A cow could be heard lowing down by the river, while a dog was barking vociferously out by the negro cabins.

Ilma arose from the rustic seat and approached that part of the summer house directly overlooking the terraces. Her face was studiously averted. Noll sat silently watching her, a new fear stealing into her heart. Under such circumstances seconds pass with the slowness of minutes. With much misgiving he also arose and approached her.

"You remember," he began, "that I told you that I feared the telling of my story would not place me in the light in which I should wish you to see me?"

A mock bird that had been fluffing lazily at his feathers, suddenly awakened to life, and fluttering to the topmost bough of a pine, began pouring out his luscious, liquid notes. Ilma turned—there were great unshed tears in her eyes, while a smile half petulant, half playful was playing around her mouth.

"It is not that, sir; I was—O, I do not know what to say—I was thinking of that other woman."

## In Point of Honor.

"But don't you see?—I did not love her—I love only——"

"Noll!" thundered Colonel Fairfax. "Arthur Howard Noll!—Od's blood, does it take a peal of thunder to make you two hear out there! I say, Noll, here is a message from England, and——"

The thunder of a horse's hoofs here attracted the Colonel's attention and he failed to finish his sentence. Rapidly swinging up the graveled driveway was a horse and rider. They drew not rein until they were almost abreast of the gate upon which the Colonel had been leaning.

"George Washington has been appointed Commander-in-chief of the Continental Army——"

"The devil——"

"And here is a message from his Excellency to Brigadier-general, Arthur Howard Noll. I must be off—have other messages to deliver."

"I say, Arthur——"

"I am here, sir."

The Colonel's loud voice had created a commotion even as far as the house, and by the time Noll and Ilma had joined him, Mrs. Fairfax and a number of servants had clustered around. Wonderingly the Colonel handed the messages to their owner. Seeing expectancy written upon every face, Noll broke the seal of the first one. It was from England. A small sheet of paper, upon which was the following writing, encircled a more lengthy document:

SIR:—

Upon investigation it has been found that a deplorable mistake was made in your case, and that you were in nowise guilty of the charge upon which

## In Point of Honor.

you were convicted. Therefore the King has instructed me to personally inclose to you pardon for any crime you may, or may be suspected of having committed. I gladly correct the wrong, and freely and humbly beg your pardon for my loutish brusqueness on that day in the library. The King begs that you report for service immediately to General Gage, your commission being also inclosed. Assuring you of my regrets at your unmerited exile, I beg to remain your well wisher, FREDERICK NORTH.

Noll passed the paper to the Colonel, whose wife and daughter stood looking on over his shoulder. He then broke the seal of the message from Washington. It was short and to the point:

DEAR SIR:—

You will no doubt recall, upon seeing whom this is from, the conversation we had on the day of the raffles at the King's Inn, and in which I questioned you so closely. Sir, I was satisfied with the answers you gave. I now have the pleasure, as Commander-in-chief of the Colonial Army, to offer you a place upon my staff, or a commission as Brigadier-general in the army. If accepted please report at once ready for duty. Yours truly,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

"Gads, sir!" exclaimed the Colonel, after reading Washington's message, "You are like the man in mythology, one Antaeus, a famous wrestler! Every time he touched the ground it renewed his strength. Your misfortunes have seemingly but added to your popularity and merit in the end."

"It does seem that way, sir," answered Noll with a puzzled, uncertain air.

"Which shall you accept, sir?" asked Mrs. Fairfax.

### In Point of Honor.

But Noll did not hear her. In his heart two questions were waging battle—the love of native land; the love of woman—two mighty factors that should help govern the life of every man. Which would win?

"You have not told us which offer you will accept, Sir Howard," Ilma reminded him, a world of pleading questioning in her voice.

Noll let his eyes rest upon her. A steady purpose began to burn in them. Deliberately he took the pardon of the King and began tearing it into little bits, scattering the pieces to the winds.

"Too late," he said, "the Colonies have and of a right ought to be free."

The sun sank behind the tree-tops; the mock bird hushed his song.



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